RUBBERNECK 24

Annick Nozati
Gary Smith
Alva
Dallas Simpson
Simon H Fell
Robert Ashley
Ladislaw Starewicz

free issue

Penumbra Music

VISIT OUR WEB SITE:
www.jtiree.com/penumbra8/index.html
OR WRITE:
PO BOX 282, GRAFTON, WI 53024 USA

Confront Recordings

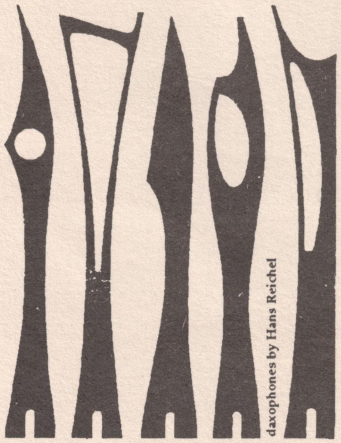
collision duo: refraction (front 01)
mick smith - violin
mark wastell - cello

scant: at the club room (front 02)
richard sanderson - electronics
mark wastell - cello robin musgrove - percussion

spook (front 03)
graham halliwell - alto saxophone
kev hopper - electric bass
richard sanderson - electronics
dave pullin - clarinet soprano saxophone

improvised music supplied on chrome cassette
mail order - cheque or postal order for £5 each inc postage / payable to
Mark Wastell 14 Lascotts Road London N22 4JN

Rubberneck T Shirt Offer



RUBBERNECK

Rubberneck, 21 Denham Drive,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6LT, UK

WHY WEAR SILK WHEN YOU CAN WEAR RUBBERNECK...

In response to readers' requests, **Rubberneck** presents its first item of non-publishing merchandise. The exclusive design (as shown) is by legendary German improvisor **Hans Reichel** and features several examples of his extraordinary invention, the **daxophone**. The design is in black on a good quality white cotton shirt. Extra-large size only.

£9.50 (UK); £10.50 (Europe)
£11.50 (other countries)
Price includes postage
Cheques payable to **Rubberneck**
Payment in pounds Sterling only
Overseas cheques drawn on UK bank, please!

RUBBERNECK
c/o 21 Denham Drive
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG22 6LT
England

ISSN 0952-6609

VOX

Welcome to Issue 24. I suspect that even some **Rubberneck** regulars will be unfamiliar with most of the names on the front cover. This issue the focus is on the overlooked and undersung among the improvising community. Of course, I know they're all overlooked and undersung in the context of the wider world, but some more than others. Annick Nozati, an experienced French singer, is virtually unknown in Britain, and London-based guitarist Gary Smith is another improvisor whose distinctive work is still under-recognised; yes, even in Britain. And, when was the last time you heard a piece of improvised binaural sound art? Never? Dallas Simpson, one of the genre's leading practitioners, explains the basis of his involvement in this neglected area of improv. Which leaves Alva, not overlooked or undersung (yet) as far as I know, but who have recently released an exciting debut CD; and Simon H Fell, who will be well known to **Rubberneck** regulars. This is Simon's third appearance in a hopefully on-going series of stimulating essays about improvised and experimental musics.

And finally, **Rubberneck 25** is now available. It's a special issue devoted to the work of the late **Joe Harriott** and his quintet, criminally overlooked pioneers of European free jazz and free improv. When are PolyGram going to reissue those pathbreaking albums of the 60s! Details about how to purchase this issue can be found on **page 58**. Keep in touch!

Chris Blackford/June 1997

24

Copyright © **Rubberneck** 1997

CONTENTS

Annick Nozati...4
Gary Smith...9
Free-Forum...13
Alva...15
Videophile...18
Dallas Simpson...22
Futures Passed...26
Simon H Fell...30
Prime Cuts...37
Short Cuts...60

Editor/publisher/designed and struggled with
Chris Blackford

Reviews Team
Chris Atton, Jim Barker
Catherine Blackford, Bruce Coates
Giuseppe Colli, John Eyles
Gus Garside, Mark Greenaway
Will Montgomery, Declan O' Driscoll
Gerard F Tierney, Ben Watson

"And that's my end, for man can wish no more,
Than so to write, as none e'er writ before."
Rochester (1647-1680)

If you find mistakes in this magazine, please remember that they are there for a purpose. We try to publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes.

An economy of means

Annick Nozati has recently released her second solo recording (the first was 16 years ago). **Chris Blackford** talks to this major French improvisor who is still virtually unknown in Britain.

Annick Nozati is one of Europe's leading improv vocalists and, like many distinguished French improvisors, still hasn't performed in Britain. However, the appearance of Michel Doneda and Lê Quan Ninh (as part of Open Paper Tree) at the 1996 LMC Festival suggests that there is some light at the end of this long tunnel... For such an experienced improvisor her recordings are surprisingly few, and tend to be on labels like Amiga and nato which are not easy to find in Britain. These things together mean that she's still virtually unknown here.

Nozati first took to the stage over 30 years ago, but not as a musician.

"I began my artistic life as a comedian in 1965 in experimental, non-verbal theatre, such as the Living Theatre. In the years 1967-68, I met the Baschet brothers and their sound sculptures. Many people of the experimental scene from different countries and different artistic disciplines met the Baschet brothers. At the same time I also met and worked with improvising musicians, in particular the Art Ensemble Of Chicago who were then living in Paris. It was the period of "happenings" and the first improvised music concerts. It was also the time of challenging the Establishment.

"After these artistic meetings I began to improvise with my voice. I'm self-taught in music and singing. My musical formation comes from the oral tradition and the development of the ear and listening, without the classical rudiments of music. My voice has acquired its particular quality by listening to the sound of the Baschet sound sculptures. From these I've tried to create a music which comes from the necessity to show spirit and not formal construction."

Since the late 60s, Annick Nozati has worked with a host of European improvisors, including members of the Workshop de Lyon, Urban Sax, a trio with Joëlle Léandre and Irène Schweizer, Carlos Zingaro, Daunik Lazro, Peter Kowald, and UK-based musicians such as Evan Parker, Paul Lytton, Paul Rutherford, Maggie Nicols, Lindsay

Cooper, Tony Coe, Lol Coxhill, Phil Minton, Marc Charig and Philipp Wachsmann. She has also been involved in contemporary music-theatre, performed works by the composer Georges Aperghis, and lectured on vocal improvisation at the University of Lille in France.

Most British devotees of improvised music who *have* heard Nozati will probably have done so thanks to **Organo Pleno** (FMP), a 1992 recording of her trio with Belgian pianist and accordionist Fred Van Hove and the German trombonist Johannes Bauer. The album's Latin title means 'full organ', an instrument of substantial size and adequate resources. Van Hove is also an organist, though not here; in the sleevenotes, he describes the trio's playing as "physical, sometimes even orgiastic". Indeed, this is music of substantial size, of more than adequate resources; the piano's percussive thunder and howling trombone make no concessions to the human voice. Nozati's performance is, and has to be, based on strength and stamina. So, here *organo pleno* also means 'full voice'; the organ in question being the larynx. Extremes of pitch are explored and maintained with astonishing breath control — contralto-like murmurs rising to falsetto screams that break up into a babel of microtones. 'Pars XIII', at nearly 27 minutes, runs the gamut of moods from the delicate to the tempestuous. This is powerful trio music, featuring a singer whose emotional range and commitment intensifies the overall experience.

"Improvised music needs this blend of sensitivity and emotional faculties to feel the present moment — life in its intense reality. There's a very strong sensual, organic contact which guides the music. Not only an intellectual conception, but *feeling* also guides my singing. In improvised music the conception does not pre-exist, but occurs at the same time as the playing. This attitude puts the singer or the instrumentalist in a state of urgency. The improvisor is a research worker, a person who rouses others. He is a philosopher in search of the absolute, an alchemist who creates the ingredients of his music in the hope of the revelation which will disclose himself and the sense of his own existence. Improvisation is not a distraction, it does not offer a complacent music, but asks questions and often leaves them unanswered. Improvisation like this is subversive. It's in opposition to classical music teaching where the young musician comes into contact with rules of construction and a kind of sport training where he learns how to repeat the classified models of his society's current aesthetic and cultural taste. This approach is far from the fundamental roots of artistic creation."

"Improvised music needs this blend of sensitivity and emotional faculties to feel the present moment — life in its intense reality. There's a very strong sensual, organic contact which guides the music."

La Peau des Anges (Vand'oeuvre) — rough translation: "the skin of angels" — is Annick Nozati's second solo recording (the first was 16 years ago) and, to my mind, the most satisfying and distinctive vocal album of 1997. Comparing this to its predecessor of 1981, Nozati says: "It testifies to the constancy of inspiration and to the evolution of expression and style towards an economy of means." **La Peau des Anges** also reveals another, more intimate level of emotional subtlety, effectively challenging the still widely-held and mistaken belief that collectivity is the essence of improvised music. There are captivating moods here that could only have been expressed by a solo improvisor, working alone and without the expectation of 'intrusion' from another personality. That exquisite, immensely moving sense of our existential aloneness, our vulnerability as individuals (one finds it in the films of Bresson, Bergman and Tarkovsky), is palpably conveyed in the first three pieces where the voice is sparingly accompanied by the solemn, vibrating strings of a Baschet sound sculpture. A contemplative silence punctuates and surrounds the music. Nozati carefully modifies pitch, using

VAND'ŒUVRE RECORDS

AVAILABLE IN 1997 :

ANNICK NOZATI
"LA PEAU DES ANGES"
(VDO 9712)

"ACHIARY/CARTER/ HOLMES" (VDO 9611)

Recorded by François Dietz at CCAM studio

STILL AVAILABLE :

VDO 9304 : with David Moss, Paul Lovens, David Garland, Ikue Mori, Daniel Koskowitz, Elliott Sharp, Pascal Comelade, Gestalt & Jive...).
VDO 9305 : Ciguri by Quatuor Nomad.
VDO 9306 : Tourneries by Dominique Regef.
VDO 9407 : Pierre Berthet and Frédéric Le Junter.
VDO 9508 : Ensemble SIC playing Kurtag, Taïra, Leroux, Giner and Birkenkötter.
VDO 9509 : (Various artists) Jim O'Rourke, Lê Quan Ninh, Jérôme Noetinger, Daniel Koskowitz, Frédéric Le Junter, Massimo Simonini, Dominique Petitgand.
VDO 9610 : Daunik Lazro/ Evan Parker/ Joe Mc Phee.

ASK FOR FREE INFORMATIONS
(FOR VAND'OEUVRE AND 33REVPERMI : SOIXANTE ETAGES, ETAGE 34, IDIOME 1238 AND JAGGER NAUT)

CCAM
BP 126 F 54504 Vandœuvre-lès-Nancy Cedex
Tel. 33 3 83 57 52 24 • Fax 33 3 83 53 21 85
E-mail : ccam@worldnet.fr

CORTO NANCY

reverb to enhance each nuance of expression. 'La Dame en noir dit JE' deftly introduces a second, overdubbed voice (like the alter-ego of the first), deepening the mystery of this cloistered atmosphere.

"By studying the evolution of sound material in its intimacy in everyday life we become able to hear sounds in their infra-structure. We can develop a more precise sound analysis than the one indexed in classical teachings of harmony. We can create steps of pitches and much more complex and rich time-divisions by perceiving these infra-sounds and infinitesimal beats. In just one sound we can hear a tonal root and an infinity of harmonics and all the other elements that come with breath, tension and the meeting of sounds in space."

La Peau des Anges also reveals Nozati the abstract painter and writer; texts are recited rather than sung like song lyrics; paintings reproduced in the booklet display the same kind of concern for textural detail that one finds in the music.

"This research that I carry out in improvised music I continue when painting and writing texts. I try to see and uncover what is beyond mere appearance, what is hidden under the obvious. The small details. We can feel what is vibrating in the dark when we linger over looking, what is vibrating in silence when we linger over listening. We can reveal the sense of this meeting between words and pictures.

"A few years ago I stopped making music for two or three months. I needed to stop what had become a continuous relationship with sound vibration. Painting was a 'fallow' time for my ears, a time to fertilize something else. After this period of painting, I returned to concerts with a fresh sense of hearing. My painting has had an influence on the style of **La Peau des Anges** and gives it this contemplative aspect. When I am painting I work with little molecules of pigment and light. For me, music and painting are like working in the same domain of sonic and visual vibrations."

The Baschet sound sculptures which were an important early influence in Nozati's career also play an important part on the latest album.

"The metal sheet I use on **La Peau des Anges** is called the Cristal, the most well known of the Baschet sound sculptures. It's played by rubbing glass rods with wet hands. The metal sheet vibrates from the frequencies of the voice, creating a natural reverb and its own unique metallic frequencies which blend with the frequencies of the voice. All the recorded effects are made by this instrument which looks like a double metallic corolla on a stand with four vibrating strings."

This somewhat functional description of the Cristal belies its strikingly unusual sounds (reminiscent of the two-metre long Siberian wind instrument, the ki un ki, as played by Stephan Micus on **Darkness And Light**, ECM 1990) which are at their most extrovert on the three-part 'Suite Grande Tôlle Folle', where high-pitch vocal frequencies release a shower of penetrating metallic resonances. Interestingly, Annick Nozati returns to solo voice (with maybe a tinge of Cristal reverb) for the brief, concluding 'Le Temps Invisible' — a fine example of her stylistic "economy of means". Deceptively simple, poignant. **R**

Photo: **J Yves Camus**

Special thanks to **Marie-Noëlle Brun** *for translating my questions and Annick Nozati's answers.*

Annick Nozati's **La Peau des Anges** is available on Vand'oeuvre (9712 CD). Vand'oeuvre, c/o CCAM, BP 126, F54504 Vandoeuve-Les-Nancy, Cedex, France.

DISCOGRAPHY

Annick Nozati (solo) (In And Out, 1981); Annick Nozati & Fred Van Hove, **Uit** (nato 994, 1986); **Johannes Bauer/Annick Nozati/Fred Van Hove** (Amiga 856411, 1988); Johannes Bauer/Annick Nozati/Fred Van Hove, **Organo Pleno** (FMP CD 56, 1992 CD); Annick Nozati, **La Peau des Anges** (solo) (Vand'oeuvre 9712, 1997 CD); Various Artists, **Six Sequences Pour Alfred Hitchcock** (nato 53041-2, 1984 CD); Various Artists, **Alternate Cake** (nato 824, 1986); Lol Coxhill, **Instant Replay** (nato 25/32, 1981-82); Joëlle Léandre, **Le Douze Sons** (nato 82, 1983)

ULTIMA THULE

1Conduit Street, Leicester, LE2 0JN, England
Tel: 0116 2854545, Fax: 0116 2854555
Record shop & Mail-order service

We specialise in adventurous and progressive musics from around the world. Our specialisties are Krautrock, Eurorock, Prograck, Psychedelic, Fusion, RIO, Canterbury, Zeuhl, Avant-Garde, Electronic, Industrial, Ambient, Synthesizer, and all sorts of weird music that no one has named yet! We stock new and second-hand: records, CD's, cassettes, etc. We also publish Audion Magazine, which covers this range of music. Sample copy £2.50 inc. P&P. For your free catalogue, send a 29p stamp and address! Shop open: Wed - Fri 12:00-17:00, Sat 10:00-18:00

NEW: SOWARI Acta 10CD by **Phil Durrant**

10 structured pieces for acoustic violin or violin plus live electronics

Playing Alone Acta 9CD Three solo piano pieces by **Veryan Weston**

A master at delivering his punches just before or after they might be expected to land. **WIRE**

A New Distance Acta 8CD by **The Spontaneous Music Ensemble**
John Stevens/Roger Smith/John Butcher The last two recorded concerts (1994)
an essential document, yes, but more importantly, wonderful listening too. **WIRE**

A Henry Cowell Concert Acta 7CD

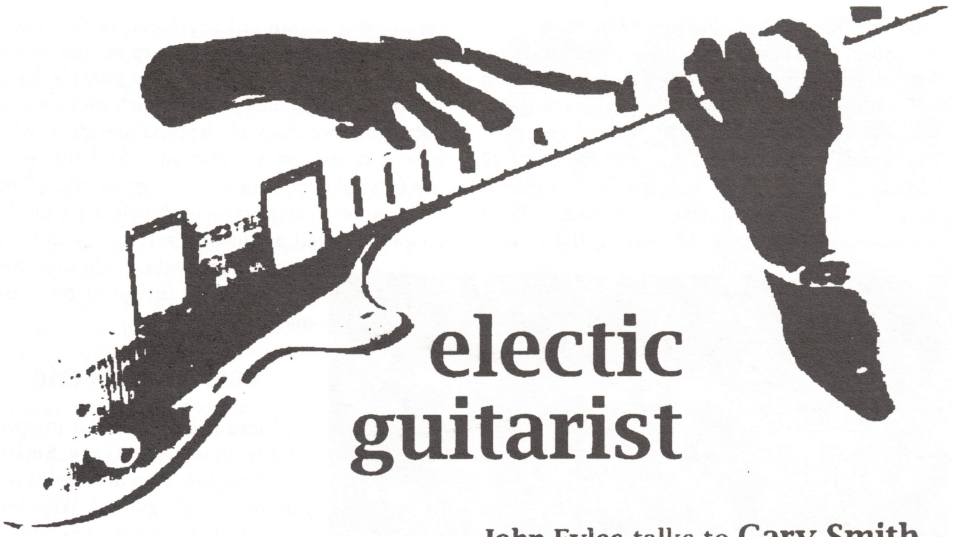
21 piano pieces by Henry Cowell played by **Chris Burn**
The most convincing Cowell champion I've heard. **Observer**

Thirteen Friendly Numbers Acta 6CD

9 solo and 4 multitracked saxophone pieces by **John Butcher**
A strong showcase for Butcher as both creative and masterful reed player and inventive stratagist for free improvisation. **CADENCE**

ACTA

All CDs £12 inc p&p
28 AYLMER ROAD, LONDON, W12 9LQ.
Ph/Fax 0044 (0)181 740 1349
email JBacta@msn.com



electic guitarist

John Eyles talks to **Gary Smith**, one of British improv's most original guitarists, and still one of its most underrated.

Every so often, we are all lucky enough to hear some new music that makes us sit up, take notice and ask, "What is that?" I had exactly that experience in mid-94 when **Karyobin** by Spontaneous Music Ensemble was released on CD by Chronoscope. Excited as I was by the reappearance of the SME session, it was the cassette that came with my (review) copy of **Karyobin** that really grabbed my attention. It consisted of seven improvised guitar and drum duets by Gary Smith and John Stevens. Stevens was in typically good form, punctuating, goading, responding, reacting, sometimes with the deftest of touches of brushes on cymbals, at other times belting hell out of his kit. Truly, a listening drummer. However, John Stevens was a known (if constantly surprising) quantity. The guitar work of Gary Smith was the real shock. His use of dynamics, the way in which he produced swathes of sound that seemed to hover and then curve in the air, his creative use of stereo, his amalgam of rock/jazz/improv/classical into a seamless whole, all singled him out as one to watch. Why had I never heard (of) him before?

I contacted Chronoscope to find out when this music was due for release on CD, only to be told that no release was planned. The cassette was only included with **Karyobin** because Gary Smith had written sleevenotes for the CD and it might help explain who he was. This seemed incredible because the music on that cassette was (is) incredible, too. There is a happy ending. Eventually, those cassette recordings were to see the light of day, as **Gary Smith • John Stevens** courtesy of Thurston Moore's own label, after Moore saw Gary Smith perform at the John Stevens Memorial Concert at Conway Hall in London. Though cruelly under-reviewed, **Gary Smith • John Stevens** was one of last year's best releases.

history

In the months after receiving that cassette, I filled in the past history of Gary Smith. Starting from a rock background — his guitar heroes included George Harrison, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck — he moved into the jazz scene in the 70s, playing with a group called the Acme Quartet, followed by a period in singer Bill Fay's group.

After this, he stopped playing live but continued recording. He then spent three years studying classical harmony, counterpoint and composition with composer John South, also recording for him. Between 1989 and 1990, he had recorded **Rhythm Guitar** (Impetus), a collection of 22 solo guitar improvisations on acoustic, amplified acoustic and electric guitars. That album title is disingenuous, rather underselling the music.

photo: Rupert Truman

It does develop and explore the rhythmic aspects of improvisation, but is also inventive, subversive and experimental — certainly not *just* rhythm guitar! As with the music recorded with John Stevens, it was all produced without edits or overdubs. At around the same time, he also played guitar with God on their album **Possession**.

Since the John Stevens session he has recorded a trio album with drummer Lou Ciccotelli (of God, Ice and Laika fame) and David Sturt (who has done everything from TV jingles to Pink Floyd sessions). This has just been released as **Stereo** on the Chronoscope label. Despite being very different to the John Stevens session, this trio music is equally good, and is unmistakably Gary Smith. Again it uses polyrhythms, and frequently there are two or more independent guitar parts going on at once (again, all produced without edits or overdubs). As before, there seems to be a geometric quality to some of the phrases. By his use of glissandi, and pedals which move sounds between stereo channels, he produces music which is best described as "curved". And this is not just fanciful reviewers' talk! In conversation, Smith will frequently talk about his music in terms of its shapes, as well as making references to visual art and architecture. He does have a very visual image of his music making.

eclectic electric

There is a wonderful misprint on the insert for **Gary Smith • John Stevens**. It credits Smith with playing "electic guitar". With time, I've come to think that this composite of *electric* and *eclectic* is a worthy description of Gary Smith's playing. He definitely plays electric guitar in his use of effects and pedals to give his music a swirling, solid quality; but it's also electric in the atmosphere it generates, achieving an interplay between tension and release. His music is also eclectic; he soaks up influences, processes them and spews them out — as Gary Smith music. Sometimes they are playfully obvious. Two examples being, that distinctive opening chord from 'A Hard Day's Night' which begins **Rhythm Guitar** and, when he played the John Stevens Memorial Concert, he finished off an impeccable improv set with a Country lick worthy of James Burton or Chet Atkins!

Other times, influences are more obscure but deeper-seated. One such is Italian monophonic composer Giacinto Scelsi (1905-88). Scelsi is probably best known (if known at all!) for his therapeutic habit of repeatedly striking a single piano note and then letting it fade away, to cure himself of illness "brought on by twelve-tone compositional techniques". Anyone interested in Scelsi should investigate **The Complete Works For Clarinet** (CPO 999 266-2) which is on a par with

Jimmy Giuffre clarinet. Gary Smith cites the "sustained sound" of Scelsi as highly influential on parts of **Rhythm Guitar** and **Stereo**.

When I asked Gary about his immediate plans he was as eclectic as ever.

"I've been studying Beethoven piano music today... I'd like to do some stuff with someone who is into dance music, those sensuous curves and shapes. But that is rather a side issue... Ideally, I'd like to have a group with a singer — I've no one in mind. A singer gives more scope for the guitar, and means it isn't the focus the whole time... The next album with Lou (Ciccotelli) will be more arranged, with more harmony."

Smith has never been one to rest on his laurels or look back. Any attempt to discuss his past work is invariably met with, "That's old stuff. I've moved on since then. You should hear what I'm doing now. Here, listen to this tape, it will surprise you..."

To date, none of this has been idle talk. I have always been amazed, amused, bemused, surprised by his music. Smith has recently recorded a solo guitar album, entitled **Curve**, for hatART, which is in the can while hatART decide if it suits the aesthetic profile of their audience! An advance tape suggests that should hatART not release it, then it'll be a lucky label that picks it up.

Gigs remain a problem. Smith readily admits that he does not fit easily into any scene without compromise — and he does not compromise easily. In the past he has played what he terms "avant-garde venues" such as LMC events at Conway Hall, and he foresees that he will do so again because he loves to play live in front of any audience. However, he also has the desire to play to larger, broader-based audiences and hopes that the release of **Stereo** will give him the chance to reach such audiences via gigs with the trio. An incomparable stylist, Gary Smith is taking improvised guitar music to places it has never been. **R**

DISCOGRAPHY

Rhythm Guitar (solo) (Impetus IMP CD 18920 CD) **Gary Smith•John Stevens** (Ecstatic Peace! #52/ Soul Static Sound #9 CD); **Stereo** (w Lou Ciccotelli & David Sturt) (Chronoscope CPE 2003-2 CD); **Possession** (w God) (Virgin/Venture CD)

PICCADILLY RECORDS

5 - 7 Brown Street, Manchester, M2 1DA

CREDIT CARD HOTLINE / INFO: TEL / FAX 0161 839 8008

Jimi Hendrix — First Rays Of The Rising Sun	10.99
Van der Graaf Generator — Aerosol Grey Machine	11.99
National Health — Missing Pieces	12.99
Ganger — Fore	11.99
Tortoise — The Remixes — Japanese only compilation	22.99
Tortoise — A Digest Compendium Of The Tortoise's World — Japanese	22.99
James Plotkin — The Joy Of Disease	16.99
Alice Coltrane — A Monastic Trio	16.99
Pharoah Sanders — Elevation	16.99
Cluster — Soul Static Live In Japan 1996	12.99
Cluster — Live In USA 1996	16.99
Delerium — Karma	12.99
Laswell's Praxis — Transmutation Live	13.49
Modern Jazz Quartet — In A Crowd	13.49
Misha Alperin — North Story — new on ECM	13.49
Egberto Gismonti — Meeting Point — new 1997	13.49
Chris Boti including The Blue Nile — Midnight Without You	13.99
Booming On Pluto — Eltro For Droids (Ocean Of Sound 3) 2 CD set	15.99
Laswell, Schütze, Björkenheim etc (Phantom City) — Shiva Recoil	13.49
Kenny Wheeler, Bill Frisell, Dave Holland, Lee Konitz — Angel Song	13.49
Terje Rypdal — Skywards; Descendre; Odyssey; After The Rain — each	13.49
Marilyn Mazure Future Song — Small Labyrinths	13.49
Ralph Towner —(solo guitar) Ana; Lost & Found; Solstice — each	13.49
Eberhard Weber — Silent Feet; Yellow Fields; Pendulum — each	13.49
David Darling — Cello; The River (with Ketil Bjornstad) — each	13.49
John Surman — Witholding Pattern; Rev. Absalom Dawe — each	13.49
Saft/Vu — Ragged Jack — new on Avant; outstanding NY group	16.99
Alva — Fair-haired Guillotine — Zorn project; female group: unique!	16.99
Kan Mikami — Merchant On The Pass — Japanese singer/songwriter	16.99
Kazuki Tomokawa — Fat In The Morning Light	16.99
John Zorn + Naked City — Torture Garden — 2CD set	14.99
Grand Guignol	16.99
Spillane; Big Gundown; Elegy — each	13.99
Henry Cow — Legend; Unrest; In Praise...; Western Culture — each	13.49
Concerts	18.99
Robert Wyatt, Dagmar Krause, Chris Cutler — News From Babel	13.99
Jean-Luc Ponty — Live At Chene Park	13.49
Stan Getz — Best Of The West Coast Sessions	9.99
Tommy Smith, Kenny Wheeler, Jon Christensen etc — Azure (on Linn)	13.49
Steve Swallow — Deconstructed	13.99
Mary Jane Lamond — Suase — superb Gaelic vocals	12.49
Ginesa Ortega — Siento — amazing flemenco vocalist	13.49
Richard Thompson, Danny Thompson — Industry	13.49
Tony Williams Lifetime — Spectrum The Anthology — 2CD set	17.99
Bill Laswell — Third Rail South Delta Space Age	13.99

Entire AVANT & TZADIK labels now in stock — phone/e-mail for details

Worldwide Web Page: http://gromit.mcc.ac.uk/piccadilly/

WE ACCEPT SWITCH, VISA, ACCESS, CHEQUES & POSTAL ORDERS

FREE POSTAGE (ONLY IN THE UK) IF YOU MENTION RUBBERNECK

MOLE JAZZ

311 GRAY'S INN ROAD
LONDON WC1X 8PX
TEL: 0171 278 8623
FAX: 0171 833 1029

WE KEEP THE LARGEST STOCKS OF JAZZ & NEW MUSIC CDs/CASSETTES/LPs IN THE COUNTRY. WE ARE ALSO MAIL ORDER SPECIALISTS — UK AND WORLDWIDE. WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS. FOR A FREE COPY OF OUR LATEST MAIL ORDER LIST, PLEASE CONTACT US AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

HAROLD MOORES RECORDS

London's Specialist
Record Shop

- Classical, traditional, contemporary, films, shows.
- Latest releases, extensive back catalogue of CDs.
- Unique mail order offer. All CDs sent post free.
- Over 30,000 LPs (Europe's largest stock).
- Want lists welcomed. Special finders service.
- Collections (LPs + CDs) purchased for cash.
- Access/Visa preferred for mail order.
- Friendly service, true expertise.

2 GREAT MARLBOROUGH ST,
LONDON W1V 1DE
TEL (0171) 437 1576
Fax: (0171) 287 0377

free-forum

Magazines...

Cadence (Vol 23 No 3, March 1997) Long-running and reliable USA jazz magazine. Mostly mainstream coverage with an open-minded attitude to some improv, particularly in the large CD review section. Interviews: Claude Williamson and John Hicks. *Cadence, Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679-9612, USA.*

Double Bassist (#3, Spring/ Summer 1997) Devoted to the double bass and related matters. Interviews with Charlie Haden, Frank Proto and Paul Ramsier; articles on the octobass (Paul Brun), electric pick-ups (Steve Berry), free improvisation (Chris Blackford). Mostly mainstream jazz and classical CD reviews. Well produced. Cover price £4.95 from *Double Bassist, Orpheus Publications Ltd, 7 St John's Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2EE, England.*

Musicworks (#67, 1997) Interviews with Fergus Kelly, Yuji Takahashi and Michel Bettez; essays on Aural History of Architecture, Sound Design for Loisaida, Xenakis' *Kraanerg*, etc; CD reviews, conference and concert reports. Excellent presentation, informed writing. Subscribers get relevant CD/ MC. *Musicworks, 179 Richmond Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5V 1V3.*

Noisegate (#4, November 1996) Contents include Bastiaan Maris, Birdyak, Ken Hyder, noisy audiences, pyrotechnic sound, crystal sets, etc. An important recent addition to the British experimental music press. £2.50 from *Noisegate, 150 Scott Road, Pitsmoor, Sheffield S4 7BJ, England.*

Revue & Corrigée (#30, December 1996) Interviews with Caroliner, V2, Lionel Marchetti and Sub Rosa label; an overview of the US Tzadik label (*but how do you get review CDs from this elusive label?*); news, and CD reviews covering a wide range of experimental musics. Recommended (in French). *Revue & Corrigée, 25 rue Docteur Bordier, 38100 Grenoble, France.*

The Wire Recent interviews with Evan Parker, David Shea, Doctor Nerve, Keiji Haino, John White, David Cunningham, Chris Cutler, Can. Still the most radical and intelligent music magazine you'll find in WH Smith. *The Wire, 45-46 Poland Street, London W1V 3DF, England.*

Books...

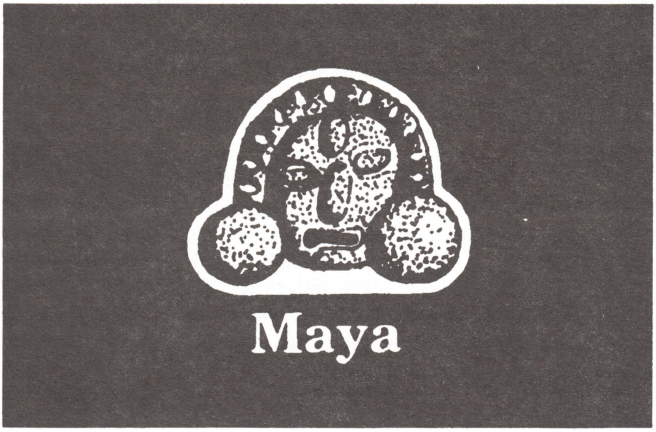
Small Press Guide 1997
Edited by Ian Walton
Writer's Bookshop (PBK £7.99)

British small press publishing is in a healthy state judging by the *quantity* of magazines, journals and such like ('fanzines' don't appear to get a look in here) still being produced by enthusiasts for love rather than mere money. *Quality* is, of course, another matter and it's up to the intrepid explorer to discover the merits, and otherwise, of individual obscure creations listed here.

The overwhelming majority of titles are centred on poetry with science fiction, fantasy and horror forming the greater part of the remainder. Britain's many and diverse small press music publications are not well represented; I suspect the 'blame' lies equally with the relevant editors for not submitting information to the Small Press Guide, and with the Guide itself for not being adventurous enough in its pursuit of non-poetry titles. However, for those interested in the above fields there's a wealth of work to investigate, some of it specializing in the kind of delightfully recondite material that you're not likely to find on sale in bookshops or arts centres.

While I must congratulate the Guide's editor Ian Walton and his assistants on their valuable work in compiling this important directory, I'm afraid I was often distracted by the irritating number of proper noun misspellings (eg, Kerouac as "Keroval" and "Kerovac", Burroughs as "Burroveths", Greil Marcus as "Grail Marws", *Wordshare* as "Worshare", and **Rubberneck** as "Ribberneck"). These and other slip-ups tend to undermine the authority of an otherwise excellent guide. Peter Finch's introduction attempts to pin down the idiosyncrasies of small press publishing and provides some useful advice to aspiring contributors. *Writers' Bookshop, 7-11 Kensington High Street, London W8 5NP.* **R**

Free-Forum is compiled and reviewed by **Chris Blackford**



NEW RELEASE

You Forget To Answer MCD9601

Barry Guy (bass), Mats Gustafsson (saxes, fluteophone), Raymond Strid (percussion)

"... their fine understanding is evident here... This is marvellous trio improvising."

Chris Blackford (**The Wire**)

Also available:

Obliquities

Evan Parker (sax), Barry Guy (bass) MCD9501

ISKRA 1903

Paul Rutherford (tromb.), Phil Wachsmann (violin), Barry Guy (bass) MCD9502

Arcus

Barry Guy, Barre Phillips MCD9101

Elsie Jo

Evan Parker, Irène Schweizer, Connie Bauer, Barry Guy, Barre Phillips, Paul Lytton MCD9201

Fizzles

Barry Guy solo MCD9301

G. Ph. Telemann

12 Fantasies for violin, Maya Homburger (baroque violin) MCD9302

Imaginary Values

Evan Parker (sax), Barry Guy (bass), Paul Lytton (perc.) MCD9401

Witch Gong Game II/10

Barry Guy & The NOW Orchestra MCD9402

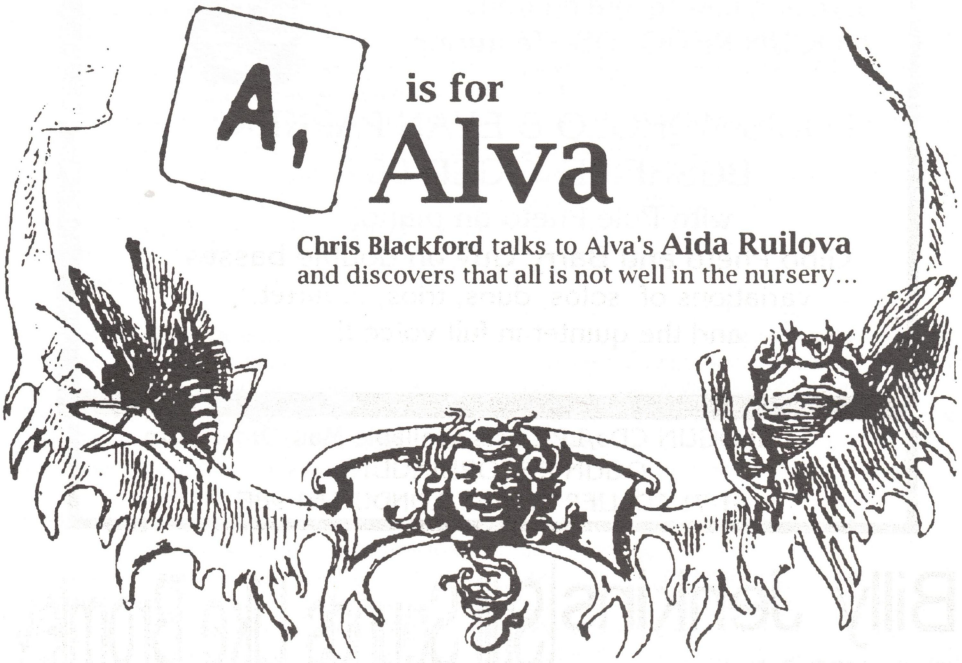
£11 per CD

Special offer: £20 for two CDs (including p&p)

send cheque or postal order to:

MAYA RECORDINGS, Carrickmourne, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, IRELAND

Fax (0)56 58 709



is for Alva

Chris Blackford talks to Alva's **Aida Ruilova** and discovers that all is not well in the nursery...

Alva came my way back in March. Their debut CD, **Fair-haired Guillotine**, still sounds just as irresistibly charming, child-like, unsettling and elusive as it did the first time. It seems that John Zorn was equally fascinated after hearing a tape of six songs which the Tampa, Florida trio sent him; forthwith they were signed to his Avant label.

Formed in 1995, Alva comprise **Aida Ruilova** (keyboards, bass clarinet, guitar), **Liza Wakeman** (violin and guitar) and **Michelle Anderson** (saxophone). Correspondence with Aida Ruilova over the Internet elicits concise answers. And there seems little to be gained by pressing for more detail in the hope of unravelling the mysteries of an album which often has the timeless quality of a dream; as futile and destructive, perhaps, as attempting to tease out a precise meaning from the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.

Alva's vivid soundworld calls to mind the surreal animated films of Jan Svankmajer and the Brothers Quay, where child-like innocence is invaded by grotesque mutations, sadistic black humour and the presence of sinister, watchful puppets. Ruilova informs me that parts of **Fair-haired Guillotine** were specifically created for the soundtrack to Lewis Klahr's film *Calendar The Siamese* which premiered at the Museum Of Modern Art in April. In keeping with their skewed take on childhood, 'Edward Gorey' celebrates the quirky, macabre imagination of the children's author and illustrator, a ragged bassline repetition underpinning the girlish playground chant. 'Mommy' evokes an atmosphere of nightmarish unease with a child's hair-raising cries pushed to distortion amid a whorl of synths; while high-pitch chants, insistent kiddy percussion and the demented buzz of a trapped insect on 'Fly Piece' also tell us that all is not well in the nursery.

"There is really no 'direct approach' in structuring all the different elements," Aida

Exciting new recording from
OGUN RECORDS featuring

LOUIS MOHOLO & EVAN PARKER
BUSHFIRE OGCD 009
with Pule Pheto on piano,
Gibo Pheto and Barry Guy on double basses
variations of solos, duos, trios, ,quartet,
and the quintet in full voice !!

All OGUN CDs/LPs, lists available Mail-Order from
OGUN RECORDINGLTD
61-71 COLLIER STREET, LONDON N1 9BE

Billy Jenkins
with the VOG Collective
including Iain Ballamy, Django Bates,
Davey Williams

Still Sounds Like Bromley
The sequel to his classic
Sounds Like Bromley - after 15 years!
BDV 9717

The Babel Label

Full catalogue from:
Babel
29A Connaught St, London W2 2AY
Tel: (0)171-262-0836
Our Web site has biographies, sound bites and further information
http://www.babel.offworld.co.uk

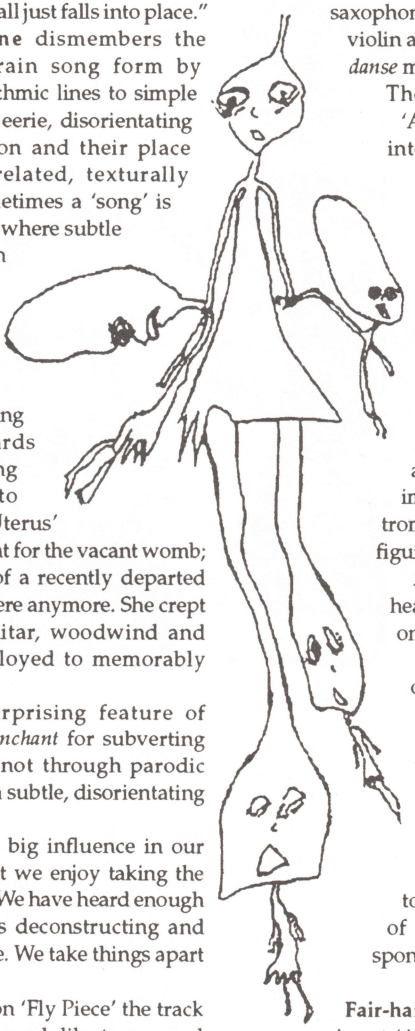
Steve Argüelles/The Recyclers
Music created from recycled tunes, sounds and instruments
BDV 9716

'A vigorous insight into the full width of an unorthodox contemporary performer's existence.'
John Fordham, Guardian

Visit

Ruilova emphasises. "It is more like a game for us. We are influenced by each other and we react to this while playing. In turn subconsciously creating some sort of loose cohesion that mends all the elements together. It all just falls into place."

Fair-haired Guillotine dismembers the conventional verse/refrain song form by reducing melodic and rhythmic lines to simple phrases which acquire an eerie, disorientating quality through repetition and their place amongst seemingly unrelated, texturally ambiguous elements. Sometimes a 'song' is merely *glimpsed*, especially where subtle tape manipulation has been used on miniatures such as 'Succubus' and 'Cold War'; the latter combines a strangely poignant vocal loop with what sounds like multiple bouncing tennis balls and backwards grainy violin — its strong emotional pull is hard to rationalise. So too 'Blue Uterus' which appears to be a lament for the vacant womb; the gentle, spectral voice of a recently departed infant whispers, "I'm not here anymore. She crept out." Simple acoustic guitar, woodwind and tremulous violin are deployed to memorably mesmerising effect.



Perhaps the most surprising feature of Alva's soundworld is a *penchant* for subverting classical chamber music, not through parodic tomfoolery, but often with a subtle, disorientating lo-fi aesthetic.

"Classical music was a big influence in our youths," says Ruilova, "but we enjoy taking the pristine perfection out of it. We have heard enough of that and part of Alva is deconstructing and destroying in order to create. We take things apart and make something else."

After the initial lunacy on 'Fly Piece' the track suddenly assumes an odd march-like tempo and soaring, bittersweet melody, but it's the gritty edge to the playing in this string duet that breeds a sense of unease. 'Flux' opens with organ, saxophone and violin in solemn, funereal mood until gradually the organ tones become sharper and uneven; thereafter the piece descends into nightmare atmospherics, followed by a brief folk-like penny whistle flurry, before returning to the solemn opening theme. There's a renaissance feel to 'Dance Of David' where careful use of reverb turns a saxophone into a krumhorn. Piano and violin also collude in this devilish little *danse* macabre.

The album's longest piece is 'Anni', a 10-minute suite divided into five short movements each bearing a Latin title. The first is a piano-led waltz which slowly shifts out of kilter; the second is like a kindergarten chorus, while the third's anguished strings theme and minimalist rhythmic tendencies are distinctly Nymanesque; then a delicate piano section where the left-hand recalls the first of Satie's *Trois Gymnopédies* and, to finish, a bleary-eyed improv between bass clarinet and trombone with hints of the waltz figure which began the suite.

Actually, improvisation is at the heart of Alva's creativity, though one might not suspect this.

"It is almost the entirety of each piece," Aida Ruilova explains. "Of course, there are predominant motifs, but the moving around them and the weaving of certain melodies is almost entirely improvisation. We usually have to go back to our recordings in order to learn the piece because most of the pieces have been created spontaneously." **R**

Fair-haired Guillotine is available on Avant (Avan 072 CD). UK distributor is Harmonia Mundi (Tel: 0171 608 2787).

Thanks to **Alva** *for the use of the illustrations.*
Thanks to **Will Montgomery** *for Internet assistance.*

Video phile

Nadja and the eclectic Dracula for the 90s; _Nanni Moretti's_ diary; stylish ghost stories from Japan: _Kwaidan_; insect encounters: the animation of _Ladislaw Starewicz_...

Nadja (1994)
Dir. Michael Almereyda
with Elina Löwensohn, Suzy Amis, Galaxy Craze, Martin Donovan, Peter Fonda
ICA Projects ICAV 1021
89 mins, Black & White

A film which owes so much to other film makers that it's a miracle the bailiffs haven't been sent round. Perhaps that's because the heavy influences have been put to such good use. First of all, the general tone of the film comes from Ingmar Bergman via the more modern filter of Hal Hartley. The characters are generally young (at least in appearance!) and suffer a high level of late 20th-century existential alienation, their dialogue is abstracted and disjointed, their actions lack certainty. The actors are from the Hartley stable. Martin Donovan starred in **The Unbelievable Truth** and **Amateur** alongside Elina Löwensohn who also featured in **Simple Men**.

Other influences are Carl Dreyer's **Vampyr** (in the eerie use of disquieting close-ups, a pervasive lyrical unreality, and scenes of supernatural horror in everyday settings) and FW Murnau's **Nosferatu**, inasmuch as **Nadja** is also an adaptation of *Dracula* with a number of significant changes. Nadja (Löwensohn) is a Dracula who rarely shows her fangs yet retains a deep sense of ennui and alienation. Renfield, Jonathan Harker and Van Helsing (played by a frenetic Peter Fonda) are also present, while Lucy is stunningly portrayed by the strangely named and magnetic Galaxy Craze, an actress we need to see more often. David Lynch's influence is also apparent (not only as a director but also as producer and in a bit part as a morgue attendant), as is the American Underground Film's kitsch technique of using Fisher-Price's toy Pixelation video camera for the scenes of vampirism.

Elina Löwensohn

However, even with all these highly visible influences, Almereyda has made a worthwhile and original film. The story, although hackneyed, is engaging because of the lack of moral outrage or horror shown by the characters — the presence of vampires in the middle of New York seems to be business as usual to them. This sets it apart from other adaptations of Stoker's book, but the film's real focus is the performance of Löwensohn and Craze who both bring a subtle passion to their roles. Perhaps someone will now make 'Jim Jarmusch's *Frankenstein*'.

Jim Barker

Dear Diary (1994)
Dir. Nanni Moretti
with Nanni Moretti, Renato Carpentieri, Antonio Neiwiller
Artificial Eye ART 107
96 mins, Colour

A film in three chapters, **Dear Diary** takes us through a year in the life of its director Nanni Moretti (winner of Best Director at Cannes in 1994). In chapter one, the camera follows Moretti on his Vespa through rather uninspiring streets in Rome, while the voice-over tells us about his passion for exploring

different neighbourhoods. Although amusing at times, this is like watching someone's home movie — one or two laughs but nothing very memorable.

Chapter two continues the diary theme, although here voice to camera and voice-overs are replaced by dialogue between Moretti and friend as they search for peace and solitude in the Eolian islands. This kind of format calls to mind a travel show, lots of beautiful scenery, some engaging characters, but a rather forced narrative.

In chapter three, Moretti adopts a style reminiscent of fly-on-the-wall documentary, taking us through a year of frustrating encounters with mainstream and alternative medics. Only in this chapter does one really begin to appreciate the inclusion of this low-key, lighthearted content. In a sense, its presence serves to throw into sharp contrast the more intimate and genuinely moving events recorded in this part of the film. At the same time it's a reminder of the multi-textured and layered content not just of diary writing/making, but of life itself.

Catherine Blackford

Kwaidan (1964)
Dir. Masaki Kobayashi
with Keiko Kishi, Tatsuya Nakadai, Kazuo Nakamura, Tetsuro Tamba, Rentaro Mikuni
Tartan TVT 1157
154 mins, Colour

Strangely enough, this stunning quartet of quintessentially Japanese ghost stories ('Kwaidan' means 'ghost story') is based on the writings of an American, Lafcadio Hearn, who collected and published tales and legends from Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Kobayashi's adaptations are both visually and culturally stunning. Best known for his nine-hour epic trilogy **The Human Condition** (1959-61), the director makes full use of Japanese tradition in both set and costume. The Samurai uniforms, priests' robes, elegant dresses, and dishevelled peasants' rags are rich and colourful, while the obviously artificial sets (including a sky painted with eyes in the 'Snow Woman' segment) give the viewer a sense of theatrical and storytelling distance. All four tales are impressive, but the third segment, 'Hoichi the Earless' is the most affecting. At first we see a re-enactment of a medieval sea battle which captures all the power and tragedy of the Japanese Samurai tradition against a background of burning red sky, then a blind *biwa* (a kind of Japanese sitar) player is called upon to sing the song cycle of the battle by the ghosts of the fallen. His attempt to escape their spiritual clutches has horrific consequences.

In all, this film makes a welcome change from other similar compendium horror films of the 60s like **Twice Told Tales** (1963), **Dr. Terror's House Of Horrors** (1964) and **Torture Garden** (1967). Japanese film has seldom been better used to chill the spine, while the startlingly eerie soundtrack by the late Toru Takemitsu is alone worth the price of the video.

Jim Barker

Ladislaw Starewicz: Selected Films
Dir. Ladislaw Starewicz
Connoisseur/Academy Video
CAV 028
133 mins, Black & White/Tinted

Ladislaw Starewicz (1882-1965) began a lifelong devotion to animation more or less by chance. An early obsession with entomology led to a desire to film his subjects. Unfortunately, the heat from his studio lights caused the poor creatures to expire. Starewicz's solution to this problem was to construct detailed models of insects which he could then manipulate at will, a process which fired his imagination. Soon he was experimenting with stop-motion cinematography, employing all kinds of puppet creatures as characters in his short films, sometimes mixing them with live-action shots of members of his family.

His earliest films, which were first seen in Moscow 1912, were instantly successful. In fact, he was always able to make a decent

CONNOISSEUR
VIDEO

The thinking person's videos from The British Film Institute

bfi

For further information call 0171 957 8957/8 General Enquiries
0171 957 8960 Credit Card Orders, or write to
Connoisseur Video Ltd, 10A Stephen Mews, London W1P 0AX

living from his work, funding outlandish research and new equipment with the money he earned from making advertising films. Resisting the lure of Hollywood, he set up his own small studio on the outskirts of Paris, where he enjoyed complete artistic control over his work, roping in family members to make the costumes for his numerous puppets.

This collection of Starewicz's work contains four shorts, plus his only feature-length animation, **The Tale Of The Fox**. First up, is one of his earliest, **The Cameraman's Revenge** (1912), an account of the various shenanigans of two couples seeking to inherit a pot of foaming beer. A parody of early melodramas, its insect stars create a bizarre atmosphere of winsome charm and mockery. Starewicz's attention to detail is exquisite; the nimble grace of a dragonfly dancer pirouetting on a stage; a grasshopper (?) riding a bicycle, dismounting in one casual movement; their carnal canoodling is tender, yet repulsive. Never sentimentalised, these creatures retain their insect strangeness, though their emotions are recognisably human. The surreal, absurd poetry of it all is a joy to watch.

More sophisticated in terms of its choreographed set-pieces is **Town Rat, Country Rat** (1926); Starewicz having now settled in France. Again, the subtlety of the gestures — this time put to hilarious use as slapstick comedy — is marvellous. A country rat recalls his somewhat decadent experiences in the big city. More than one rat's tail here assumes sneaky phallic proportions as Starewicz relishes the opportunity to indulge in ribald innuendo amongst the brilliantly staged pratfalls and dance routines.

Love In Black And White

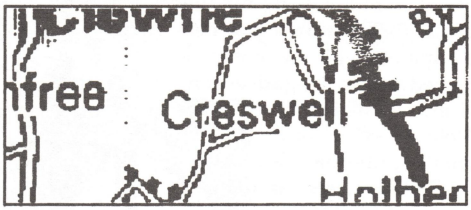
In some respects **The Mascot** (1934) is a surer technical than narrative achievement, where Starewicz skilfully matches live-action and rear-screen projections with stop-motion animation. The tale of a toy dog's adventures in pursuit of a juicy orange for a young girl at times veers towards the sentimental, but Starewicz is careful to balance this tendency with memorable sinister and sadistic touches. In his sleevenotes, Leslie Felperin rightly suggests that this film anticipates the eeriness of Jan Svankmajer's animations; the grotesquerie on offer pre-echoes Tim Burton's work, too.

Love In Black And White (1923-27) is less concerned with this sinister element, preferring to satirise Hollywood genres by basing puppets on well known stars, Tom Mix (western), Charlie Chaplin (comedy) and Mary Pickford (melodrama). The inclusion of black puppets is an interesting feature, and the knockabout satire generally avoids racial stereotyping.

Starewicz's most ambitious film closes the collection. **The Tale Of The Fox** (1930-31), (approx 65 mins) displays his love of folk tales, in this case the one about that inveterate prankster, Reynard the fox. 10 years of preparatory work went into it. Subtle characterisation is once again achieved by stunning attention to gestural detail, enhanced by superb costumes, sets and lighting. Starewicz's puppet protagonists convey a range of engaging emotions, while retaining their bestial vigour. Undoubtedly the work of a seminal animation genius, and one of the great idiosyncratic artists of the century. **R**

Chris Blackford

This element of discovery is of the greatest importance. This is what improvisation is all about. It represents the search for Truth devoid of prejudice and preconception.



Improvisational Binaural Sound Art: The Foundations Of Location Performance

Dallas Simpson

In practical terms a performance consists of carrying a portable binaural recording system to a location then listening to the ambience. When I feel I have developed a relationship with the space I will interact with whatever materials come to hand at that location. Improvisation, therefore, employs whatever found materials are present at that location, both movable and static. Wall percussion, tree bark rubbing, stone tapping and scraping, stick percussion, hand and body percussion, mouth percussion and vocalisation, for instance, are among the almost limitless possibilities of instrumentation employed. What is of critical importance for me is that the performance is location specific and intrinsically locationally pure. In other words the incarnation of sound-bodies by initiation of matter-vibration is local and intrinsic to the geography — it is unique to that place, it has a purity of the attributisation of that unique realm of expressed potentialities representing the total acoustic and all the physical matter together with the presence of the artist.

The importation of sound objects or musical instruments into a location represents a different nature of performance. In this instance there are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Great care must be taken not to offend the space while exploring and incarnating sound-bodies. It is the interaction of the sound-body, of the vibrating object interacting with the space of the location, which enables the artist to explore the ambience. Hence performances may be extremely minimal involving only movement of the artist. This represents a locomotional improvisation. It is the discovery, by movement within the space, of unique acoustic foci or the presence of local resonances, harmonies, disharmonies, near or distant echoes which the artist explores.

absolute reverence

Because my work involves the artist on location it is important to adopt an attitude of absolute reverence. There is a tension, a contradiction involved here. In order to create sound, objects must be interacted with in order to elicit their sound-body. They are struck, rubbed, moved and so forth. Disturbance is a necessary part of the performance and this places a great level of responsibility upon the artist. For the exercise of restraint, the curbing of violent and destructive behaviour in locations, the refinement and subtlety of the performance involve the elicitation and

expression of those uniquely human qualities of respect, sensitivity, humility, love, care, reverence and so forth. For art is about spiritual development and the encouragement of the expression of such sacred and divine attributes from others. We are not just performers, "doing our own thing and earning as much as we can", but teachers leading the whole of humanity away from baseness and bestiality towards sublimity and spirituality. In such wise the manners and morals of our audience and listeners should become refined through our example of these practises in our art. This is the utility of the expression of art within civilisation.

Of course, we should not inhibit the child within us. For one of the greatest attributes of the child is innocence. The innocence of the child at play, the wonderment and awe of minimal simplicity and of a certain sense of mischief, if restrained by good taste and wisdom, also features as part of my performance. For sometimes we take things too seriously and we are afraid to let go — and this in itself creates a wonderful tension for the artist to explore.

Of the most Sublime importance are moments of absolute motionless meditation. This represents the Adoration, the blissful contemplation and merging into the literal or metaphorical silence of that space, the communion of the soul of the artist with the soul of the reality of the location. Sadly we have polluted our acoustic environment to such a great extent that such spaces are becoming increasingly difficult to find.

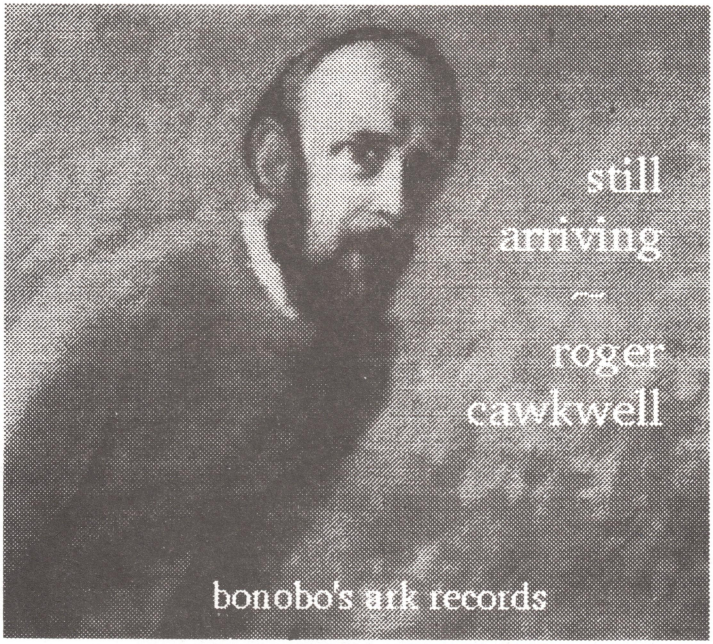
This element of discovery is of the greatest importance. This is what improvisation is all about. It represents the search for Truth devoid of prejudice and preconception. It involves the purification of the senses — the practice of the Art of listening and hearing. Listening is the ground state, the perception of physical vibration which represents the Communion, and then follows the Alchemy of experimentation. In such wise the Initiate participates in Transformation. Hearing represents connecting with the higher states of awareness — the awareness of higher realities represented by a spiritual or metaphoric perception of the acoustic realities — the recognition of parallel universes of reality within which the potentialities of the physical objects themselves, their sound-bodies and the music of the performance become projected into and fully expressed. This represents fully the process of Transcendence through Transformation.

caring humility

It is customary in these articles to cite other artists which I have worked with. To me it would be as important to work with you the reader as individuals such as the virtuoso sound artists Max Eastley and Helmut Lemke from whom I have learned so much. Our status as artists is really dependent on the status of our own development at any one time, for in reality we have simply chosen art as the tool by which we grow, develop, investigate, explore, communicate and teach the truth of our own selves. For if we fail to do that we are the total embodiment of hypocrisy.

Max Eastley, Peter Cusack and myself are planning a collaborative work using new and innovative location improvisation and presentation techniques later this year.

I have learned so much from artists in other fields, from painters, photographers, dancers, musicians, students... Recently I have been involved with a Drum Circle in Nottingham who arrange all-night sessions in the middle of the most beautiful woodland in the Nottingham area. Seated around a camp fire built of logs which one kind



a new album on a new label

Multi-instrumentalist and composer **Roger Cawkwell** has produced a strange and beautiful album , ***Still Arriving***, in which he blends jazz, minimalist and ethnic influences - using synthesisers, saxophone, bass clarinet and guitar - into a largely gentle and peaceful ambiance.

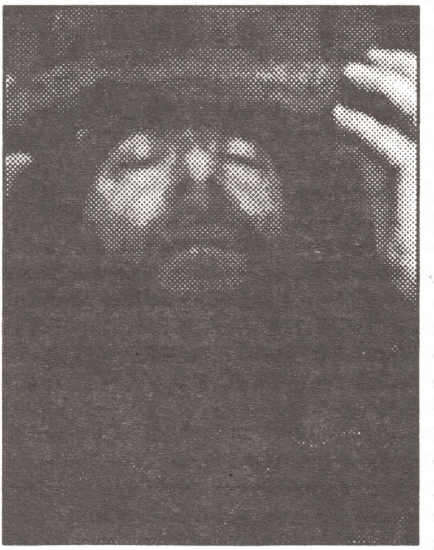
The new label, **Bonobo's Ark Records**, is an offshoot of the successful, ambient, muti-ethnic music club which has been active in London since April 1996. ***Still Arriving***, it's debut production, will become available during July 1997.

Launch concert with **Bonobo's Ark** performing live at **The Vortex,** Stoke Newington Church Street, N16 (0171 254 6516) **21st July 1997**

CD Mail order
£11 (UK) £12 (Other) incl. p & p
Cheques payable to **Bonobo's Ark**
Payment in pounds Sterling only
Overseas cheques drawn on UK bank

Bonobo's Ark Records
PO Box 12664, London E5 0UQ
Tel & Fax 0181 986 4758
e-mail: bonobo@primate.demon.co.uk
Website: http://www.primate.demon.co.uk

soul spent the day gathering so that we may be kept warm, eating morsels of food brought and prepared by many who just turn up for the event, then disappear, the atmosphere is one of a blissful, caring humility. The skill of the performers ranges from Yusupha Mboob, a professional Gambian drumming Master who is the latest prodigy of a line of several generations of Master Drummers of Gambia, to complete novices, who, like me, are happy to simply find a couple of fallen logs from which to elicit beautiful sounds. We celebrate our common humanity by participating in the common rhythm. It is the percussion of the earth, the heartbeat of the universe of all the Worlds of Creation. I would love you all to join us...



ADDITIONAL NOTE

Binaural stereo allows a full three-dimensional sound sphere around the head to be perceived when playback is presented to the listener on headphones. The use of binaural presentation effectively allows the listener to perceive the recording as if she/he were actually on location and listening as if you were there. In other words, sounds may be perceived above and below, left and right, in front and to the rear of the listener.

rules and criteria

Inevitably, the recording technique relies on sophisticated technology (digital recording techniques) and in presenting such a recording there are certain rules and criteria (which are by no means inflexible) which I have adopted as a referential framework for my art.

(1) That the most sublime recordings are those which have been perfected at a single location in one continuous take, without rehearsal.

(2) That it may be necessary, for technical and personal reasons (adjustment of recording levels, sneezing, coughing, accidents, errors!, etc.) to edit performances.

(3) Simple mixing and editing of recorded material allows the movement between locations and spaces or the combination or juxtaposition of locations with particular acoustic properties.

(4) Electronic processing (which represents the entry of a different universe of sound) will not be used, save occasional tonal correction for aesthetic and creative distinction or harmonisation as in (3).

(5) Some recognition of the binaural apparatus as an instrument in its own right implies experimentation in recording technique as part of the creative performance.

The restriction on the use of processing in (4) actually forces the desire to seek out locations with special and unique acoustic properties. It promotes the discovery and experience of new locations and is an example of how an imposed restriction can be creatively, artistically and spiritually liberating. **R**

EQUIPMENT

Custom designed and hand-built microphone set with phantom power supply direct into a Sony D7 portable DAT.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dallas Simpson, 'Dimensional Ecstasy', **Studio Sound**, March 1996, pp. 70-78.

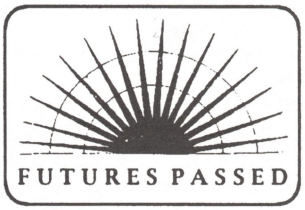
Dallas Simpson, 'Object Oriented Analysis And Dimension Theory', **OOPS Newsletter** #27, Summer 1996, British Computer Society.

Dallas Simpson, 'The Kinetic Tin Process', **British Journal Of Photography** #6946, 1993, pp. 16-17.

DISCOGRAPHY

'abhá' (compilation) (Time Recording em:t 2296, 1996 CD)

'water pump' (compilation) (Time Recording em:t 1197, 1997 CD)

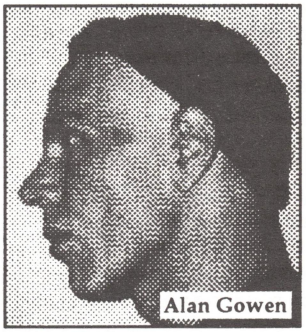


Chris Blackford **rummages through the CD reissues in search of the overlooked and underrated; plus, some recently discovered gems from the archives...**

Alan Gowen was at the heart of British jazz-rock in the 70s. Sadly, his career lasted but 10 years, from 1971 when he joined the African jazz-rockers Assagai until his untimely death in May 1981, aged 33. After the unrecorded Sunship, whose promising 1972 line-up also featured Jamie Muir, Laurie Baker, Allan Holdsworth and Lyn Dobson, he went on to achieve wider recognition as composer and keyboardist with acclaimed Canterbury scene groups Gilgamesh, National Health and Soft Head (later Soft Heap).

Gowen's most distinctive contribution to the experimental jazz of the times was his use of electric keyboards, particularly synthesizers, which were still shunned by 'jazz purists'. Rather than simply trot out the trite and twiddly flourishes of prog rock's so-called "keyboard wizards", or the flamboyant, breakneck key/tempo changes beloved by US fusionists, Gowen explored the synth's expressive potential in his emotionally sophisticated compositions. **Two Rainbows Daily** (*Cuneiform Rune 77*), a duo project with bass player Hugh Hopper, recorded in 1980 and originally released on Red Records, is a fine example of his art. The duo use multitracking to splendid effect, Hopper's fuzz bass embedded in the swirling synth colours of the opener 'Seen Through A Door'. 'Morning Order' is more impressionistic, electric bass delicately stated against bell-like electric piano and the hazy vibrato of synths; 'Every Silver Lining' sets up layers of racing, looped pulses overwhich fuzz bass and Moog weave melodies, while the gorgeous 'Waltz For Nobby' possesses a disarming, almost child-like grace. This reissue also contains five previously unreleased trio pieces snipped from longer live improvisations; Nigel Morris is percussionist. All have their moody moments ('Little Dream' especially) but the fade-in/fade-out editing replaces a full sense of flow and development with an uneven kind of vignette-improv.

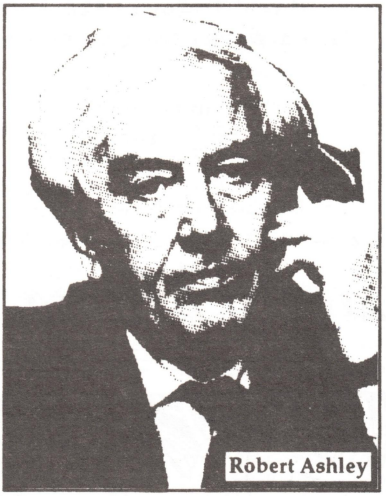
Parts of **Before A Word Is Said** (*Voiceprint VP130*), which was originally issued by Europa Records, were recorded a mere fortnight before Alan Gowen's death on 17 May 1981. Although seriously ill with leukaemia and the effects of chemotherapy he still turns in several stirring performances with Phil Miller, Richard Sinclair and Trevor Tomkins. Two Gowen pieces are among the highpoints — 'Silver Star' with its delightful, airy synth theme and 'Before A Word Is Said', arguably the album's centrepiece. Valedictory in tone, its sombre, wordless vocals and bass synth chords are echoed on piano and elaborated by the lighter, more optimistic texture of Miller's guitar. Voices of children at play bookend the work, suggesting that life goes on. It's one of the most poignant compositions to come out of the Canterbury scene.


Alan Gowen

After Alan Gowen's death, National Health and various long-time collaborators made the superb tribute album, **D.S. Al Coda** (*Voiceprint VP129*), selected Gowen compositions, originally issued by Europa in 1981. Gowen's writing always encouraged purposeful improv within often intricate thematic structures — Miller's probing guitar solos a prime example. Here, Dave Stewart performs the keyboard parts with customary, crisp aplomb, while guests Jimmy Hastings and Elton Dean supply attractive colour on flute and saxello. Moods range from the frenzied, joyously breezy, to a melancholy romanticism. (*Cuneiform, P.O. Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8427, USA / Voiceprint, P.O. Box 5, Derwentside, Co. Durham, DH9 7HR, UK*)

Automatic Writing (*Lovely Music LCD 1002*) by the highly individual American composer **Robert Ashley** (b. 1930) has been reissued with two extra tracks, 'Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon' (1968) and 'She Was A Visitor' (1967). In his fascinating sleevenotes, Ashley explains that the 46-minute 'Automatic Writing' (1979), developed out of an interest in and mild affliction from Tourette's Syndrome; in the composer's case this manifests itself in occasional involuntary speech. Recordings of Ashley's mostly incomprehensible utterances, subjected to electronic treatments, are accompanied by Mimi Johnson's whispered French "translation". Bass tones and organ harmonies hover just above the threshold of audibility, perhaps suggesting the option of adopting an ambient listening strategy; however, listening closely on headphones certainly heightens the work's strangely compelling blend of the surreal and sacred. It also has interesting psychoacoustic properties — how much is actually there, how much 'hallucinated' by the mind's ear?

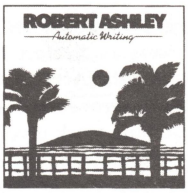
'Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon' features a woman describing a sequence of events "without any moral or psychological interpretation". The narrative, scripted by Ashley, tells of aggressive deep kissing and fellatio, and attempted oral penetration with a gun, etc. Is this rape (or even rape fantasy) or perhaps consensual sadomasochistic game-playing? The woman's detached tone keeps us in a state of moral perplexity, though this in itself leaves the work open to a possible charge of misogyny. Composed in the so-called 'permissive' late 60s, when Ashley was a member of the electronic-theatre group Sonic Arts Union with Behrman, Lucier and Mumma, it now appears particularly provocative within the current climate of 'political correctness'. Abundant tape hiss, percussive chimes and electronic drones also contribute to the troubling atmosphere. Less controversial is 'She Was A Visitor' which, like 'Purposeful Lady', is part of a 60s opera called **That Morning Thing**. The title of the piece is repeated by one speaker while others chant selected phonemes to create a dense wave of choral textures. It's an intriguing conclusion to this important collection of reissues.


Robert Ashley

The American label Lovely Music is also responsible for publishing three, more recent works by Ashley. **eL/Aficionado** (1993) (*Lovely Music LCD 1004*) is an innovative opera and, like its predecessors, **Perfect Lives** (1983), **Atalanta (Acts Of God)** (1985) and **Improvement** (1992) is a substantial work involving intricate, multilayered sung and spoken narrative and instrumental lines. Here the libretto's interlocking themes are espionage and lonely hearts ads. For about 70 minutes the work brilliantly sustains an air of uneasy calm: misty, microtonal electronics provide a subtle, low-key backdrop to the vocal parts. Thomas Buckner's light baritone recitative, and excellent diction, convey uncertainty and repressed fear with every understated inflexion, while Ashley's distinctive oration is anodyne, avuncular, yet tinged with a sinister callousness. It's another major work which again redefines the nature of modern opera.

Sign Of The Times (*Lovely Music LCD 3022*) is five pieces commissioned by the singer **Thomas Buckner**, including Robert Ashley's 'The Producer Speaks' (1991), the longest work at 25 minutes and in a so-called 'post minimal' style. A simple piano sequence is repeated with subtle variations in dynamics; tension is dramatically built and released at the changing of the chords. Over this, Buckner is free to sing the story (a strained meeting of two mysterious pianists and their impressario or producer), improvising a melodic line suggested by the speech rhythms and emotional

CLASSIC RECORDINGS FROM LOVELY MUSIC



CD1002

Robert Ashley / Automatic Writing
Now including *She Was a Visitor.*

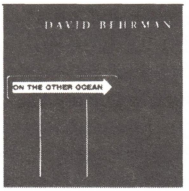
Paul Dresher / This Same Temple
Four seminal works.

David Behrman / On the Other Ocean
Early pieces for interactive computer.

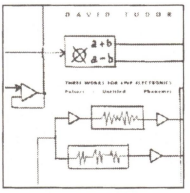
CD2011

David Tudor (1926-1996)
Three Works for Live Electronics

Visit our Web Site!
http://www.lovely.com



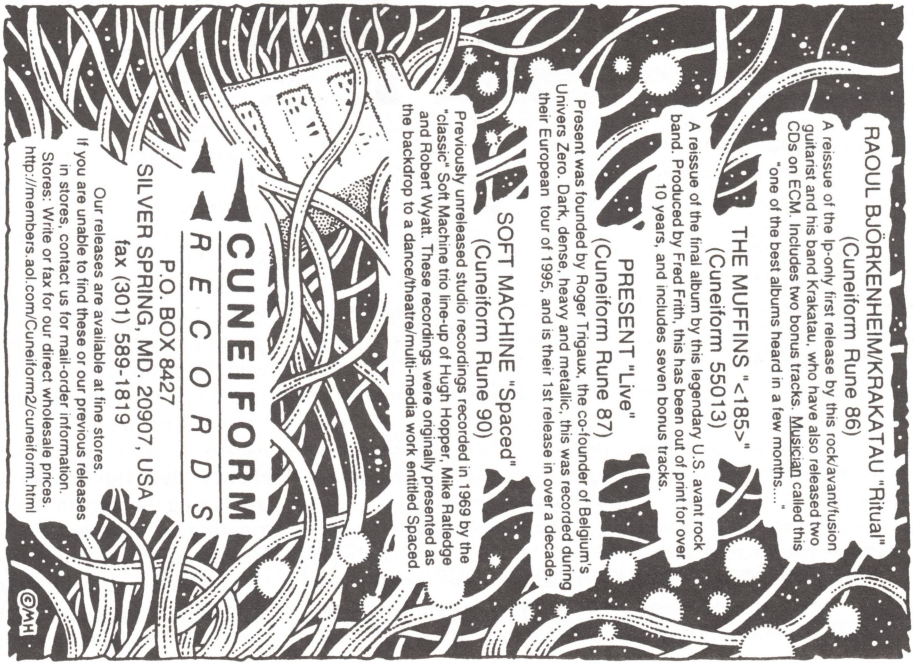
CD1041



CD1601

10 Beach Street, New York, NY 10013
tel: 212/941-8911 | fax: 212/334-5149 | info@lovely.com

Lovely Music, Ltd.

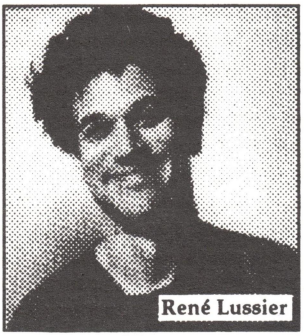

RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM/KRAKATAU "Ritual"
(Cuneiform Rune 86)
A reissue of the lp-only first release by this rock/avant/fusion guitarist and his band Krakatau, who have also released two CDs on ECM. Includes two bonus tracks. Musician called this "one of the best albums heard in a few months...."
THE MUFFINS "<185>"
(Cuneiform 55013)
A reissue of the final album by this legendary U.S. avant rock band. Produced by Fred Frith, this has been out of print for over 10 years, and includes seven bonus tracks.
PRESENT "Live"
(Cuneiform Rune 87)
Present was founded by Roger Trigaux, the co-founder of Belgium's Univers Zero. Dark, dense, heavy and metallic, this was recorded during their European tour of 1995, and is their 1st release in over a decade.
SOFT MACHINE "Spaced"
(Cuneiform Rune 90)
Previously unreleased studio recordings recorded in 1969 by the "classic" Soft Machine trio line-up of Hugh Hopper, Mike Ratledge and Robert Wyatt. These recordings were originally presented as the backdrop to a dance/theatre/multi-media work entitled Spaced.
CUNEIFORM
RECORDS
P.O. BOX 8427
SILVER SPRING, MD. 20907, USA
fax (301) 589-1819
Our releases are available at fine stores.
If you are unable to find these or our previous releases in stores, contact us for mail-order information.
Stores: Write or fax for our direct wholesale prices.
http://members.aol.com/Cuneiform2/cuneiform.html

tensions of the text. The piano repetition may try the patience of some listeners, but their patience will be rewarded by a work that contains more expressive nuances and energy than at first meets the ear. Other chamber works performed here are composed by Jon Gibson, Annea Lockwood, Leroy Jenkins and Brian Smith.

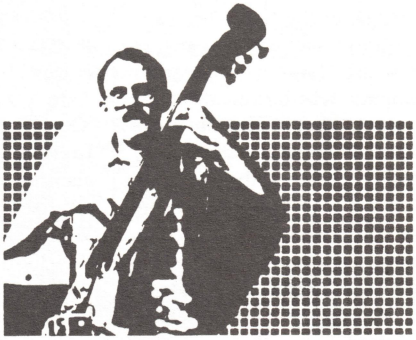
'Van Cao's Meditation' (1992) is also in the US minimalist tradition, though with Satiesque roots. Ashley was inspired by a 1989 photograph of Vietnamese composer Van Cao seated at one of that country's two grand pianos. Pianist **Lois Svard** is the solo performer on this collection entitled **With And Without Memory** (*Lovely Music LCD 3051*). Ashley's piece, which lasts nearly 38 minutes, involves the extended repetition of a sequence of single notes. Keys in the bass are held down silently to allow overtones to resonate and the pianist is permitted to hum along, which she does with a discreet and pensive charm (no Jarrettesque ebullience here!). The elusive melodic line has an aura of introspective mystery, inscrutability even. I've heard it numerous times now but still can't quite recall (or predict) the intricacies of its undulating progression. Its abiding freshness, despite repetition, is reminiscent of kindred pieces like '1/1' on Brian Eno's **Music For Airports** and, of course, Erik Satie's pathbreaking **Vexations** which lasts rather longer at over 18 hours... Compositions by Ashley collaborator, "Blue" Gene Tyranny, and William Duckworth are also featured.

'Post minimal' specialists **Relâche Ensemble** were one of several commissioners of Ashley's 1992 chamber work 'Outcome Inevitable'. **Outcome Inevitable** (*O.O. Discs 17*) is also the title of this collection which includes works by Lois V. Vierk, Eleanor Hovda and Fred Wei-han Ho. Ashley's piece thrives on rhythmic extremes; for 16 minutes the viola sustains a racing, metronomic pizzicato in marked contrast to the slow, soft-focus pulse played by the percussionist. At times almost languorous, the generous, sunlit theme passes from oboe, flute, clarinet, to soprano and alto saxophones with occasional jazz inflexions and buzzing, split tone disturbance. Unlike most of his haunting compositions, which creep up on the listener, revealing the subtleties of their understated soundworlds after a few close hearings, 'Outcome Inevitable' communicates in a surprisingly direct and quickly accessible style conveying a mood which is both reassuring and optimistic.

Robert Ashley is without doubt a major figure in contemporary composition, especially in the field of experimental opera. Such are the imaginative and evocative qualities of his texts — which make satisfying reading in their own right without the music — that he also deserves higher status as a librettist. This selection of reissued and recent works should not be missed. (*Lovely Music, 10 Beach Street, New York, NY 10013, USA / O.O. Discs, 261 Groovers Avenue, Black Rock, CT 06605, USA*)


René Lussier

René Lussier *Trois Histoires* (Ambiances Magnétiques AM 041 CD) Lussier is a hard man to pin down, active in all sorts of experimental areas, such as avant-rock, improv, studio tapework and contemporary chamber. Yet, his work is always more than the sum of these various ingredients. And, unlike the largely superficial, short-attention-span-eclecticism of the Japanese underground, René Lussier's rampant polystylism reveals a shrewd awareness of compositional structure. He's a lot like Heiner Goebbels in this respect. While the three commissions from 1990-92 ('Les Mains Moites', 'Art Brut' and 'Roche Noire') which comprise **Trois Histoires** undergo many, often rapid, transformations, he avoids a feeling of fragmentariness by careful use of motivic threads which loosely bind the disparate elements — Derome's sparkling flute on the first piece, the romantic chamber strings on the second. Lussier's light touch and unobtrusive humour mask the complexity of his textural juxtapositions, making this a thoroughly enjoyable collection. (*DAME, C.P. 263, Succ. E Montréal, Québec, Canada H2T 3A7*) **R**



Report On The Composition Of Improvised Music No.3

Simon H Fell

Regular **Rubberneck** readers (of whom I trust there are many) will perhaps recall my essays in issues 15 & 17, in which I discussed specific projects which attempted to initiate syntheses of structured and improvised music additional to those hitherto realised. I had originally hoped that the third of these articles would relate to the realisation of a further project which would shed more light on the processes involved in this work.

Unfortunately, in the 2 1/2 years since the piece in **Rubberneck 17**, the project in question has remained stubbornly unrealised, and its corresponding essay unwritten. It seems I had grossly underestimated the time-scale for the bringing into being of **Compilation III**, an extremely audacious large-scale structure for (deep breath) concert pianist, free jazz trio, rock guitarist, big band, chamber ensemble, electronics and tape. More cynical readers will already have smiled knowingly, realising that a complex work (136-page score) of such radical inclusiveness was destined to have precious little success in the pigeon-hole obsessed world of British arts funding, and I'm afraid their scepticism has indeed proved well-founded. You'll doubtless be glad to know that, in a true spirit of bloody-minded awkwardness, my reponse to this impasse has been to *expand* the work, and a new version of **Compilation III** is currently in preparation which is longer (c. 75 mins.) and uses a larger chamber ensemble, the work now requiring a total of 40 musicians. The fate of **Compilation III** now hangs precariously in the balance, subject (like so many other projects) to the decision of the Arts Council's Lottery-funded A4E scheme. More news on this in due course, naturally. (Readers may be interested to know that recordings of **Compilation I** — a suite for 9 improvisors, electronics, animals and silence (1985) — and **Compilation II** — theme and variations for 10 improvisors and electronics (1990) — are still available. See footnote.)

between the cracks

However, the failure of this project to come to fruition still provides us with much to consider. Is it possible in the late 1990s to suggest that a synthesising trans-stylistic endeavour can still create passionate innovative music rather than media pap? Has not genre-crossing become a byword for slickly anodyne trendmongery, creating a new arts category in the process?

Will large-scale experimental projects always fall 'between the cracks' in the genre-based world of Arts funding? And are 'originality' and 'creativity' still objectives that can be supported for their own sake, or are we truly in an age where 'accessibility' and 'viability' are the aims of artistic endeavour?

The burgeoning conservatism of aspiration of much improvised and contemporary music has helped to let funding bodies off the hook, giving them an opportunity to fund 'safe' work, even in a supposedly 'modern' area of art.

The desire to classify (and thus ultimately restrict) artistic activity which often hampers the more free-thinking kinds of endeavour provides a rich source of deliberation for the experimental musician. What begins as administrative convenience often mysteriously mutates into 'mission statement'. Experience has led me to wonder whether this isn't perhaps an especially British consideration, fostered by an army of post-Thatcherite upwardly-mobile professional Arts Administrators, whose necessarily slight understanding of their current field of operations causes them to rely excessively on questionnaire-type snapshot assessments and historical precedent. (Make no mistake, even musicians who pride themselves on working outside the public funding arena are fundamentally affected by the decisions these people make.)

The effect of these working practices has been indulged by the current lack of impetus in modern classical music, and a general atrophying of the specialist audience's thrust toward the 'avant-garde'. Even Improvised Music is now of an age where it is possible to observe a hardening of attitudes (let alone arteries), engendering a 'classic' type of improvisation which has specific aims and objectives, is conducted within certain stringently controlled parameters of technique, skill or ideology, and which is judged as 'successful' or otherwise depending upon its ability to create certain marvellous but increasingly familiar textural and emotional soundworlds. Some of the musicians involved in this type of activity do not have a particularly 'experimental' or 'avant-garde' aesthetic philosophy at all (although thankfully most of them still seem to share the egalitarianism and liberalism which is such an integral part of non-hierarchical performance). For an established improvisor there are also many difficulties inherent in trying to retain an open and mobile conception of the object of musical creativity within the increasingly repressive tendencies of a developing 'reputation', with its knee-jerk expectation and classification. Certainly, many readers would be surprised to learn of the increasing slimness of what would seem to be the inherent link between improvised music and experimentalism in general.

aesthetic uncertainty

The burgeoning conservatism of aspiration of much improvised and contemporary music has helped to let funding bodies off the hook, giving them an opportunity to fund 'safe' work, even in a supposedly 'modern' area of art. Thus risk-taking and experimentation can be quietly allowed to slip off the funding agenda, in favour of fashion-led trans-genre collaborations, often more the product of a marketing person's bizarre whimsy than any deeply-felt musical commitment. All of this is inevitably something of a shock to those of us who were originally attracted to improvised and contemporary music exactly because it was part of the avant-garde, and seemed to provide a point of contact with an audience who were interested in any radical arts activity; an audience who would be prepared to examine and experience experimental music (whether 'successful' or otherwise) with an open and non-prescriptive expectation.

This overall drift of focus makes it increasingly difficult to encourage listeners and funders to follow into a world of aesthetic uncertainty. Experimentalism requires a mobile and responsive

BRUCE'S FINGERS

24 CHAUNTRY ROAD, HAVERHILL, CB9 8BE, U.K.

contemporary, improvised, experimental and difficult musics

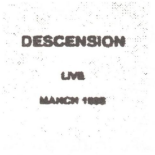
"assiduously documenting some superb music" THE PENGUIN GUIDE TO JAZZ ON CD, LP & CASSETTE
"a new release from Bruce's Fingers is always a cause for celebration .... some of the finest new music from Britain" CADENCE
"One of the most enterprising small independent labels around." IMPRESSIONS, BBC RADIO 3

selections from our current catalogue

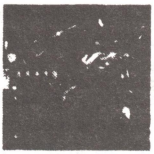
SIMON H. FELL - Music For 10(0) Leo CDO13 (CD - £11.00)
Guy Llewellyn; french horn/Charles Wharf; clarinet, bass clarinet, soprano sax, tenor sax/Pete Minns; tenor sax/Mick Beck; tenor sax/Alan Wilkinson; alto sax, baritone sax/Mary Schwarz; viola/Paul Buckton; guitar/John McMillan; electronics/Simon H. Fell; double bass/Paul Hession; drums/Ben Watson; voice 1993-94 (75 mins.)
"This disc should be ranked as the most important discovery of the Leo Lab series and its current releases." Alexandre Pierrepont JAZZ MAGAZINE/ "Music For 10(0) may be Fell's best recording yet. If you haven't checked out Fell's music, I suggest strongly that you do so soon. He's made some of the most exciting improvised music to come out of Britain this decade. This is a good place to start" Robert Iannapollo CADENCE/ "Fell's idiosyncratic vision is at its most adventurous here . . . . a major work." Chris Blackford THE WIRE

BADLAND - Badland BF 14 (CD - £11.00)
Simon Rose; soprano sax, alto sax/Simon H. Fell; double bass/Mark Sanders; drums 1995 (54 mins.) "Put this alongside the most important trios in the jazz and improvised saxophone tradition." Francesco Martinelli IMPROJAZZ/"Some impressive group improvisations from a well-matched trio. It is the sheer range of this album that marks it out, from full throttle blowing through quiet lyricism to abstract soundscapes." Gus Garside RUBBERNECK

COSMONAUTS HAIL SATAN - A Beautiful Girl Like You/Mystery Mountain DBB MZH 1947/8 (7" single - £4.75)
Mr. Cosmonaut & Mr. Satan; guitar, bass guitar, drums, electronics, tapes/Simon H. Fell; double bass 1995 (8 mins.)

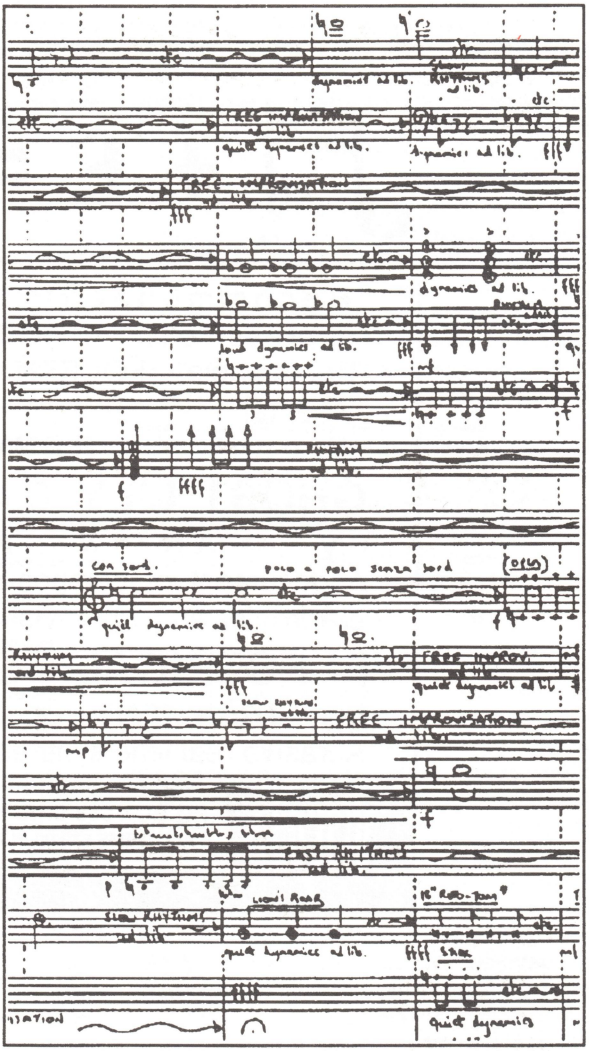


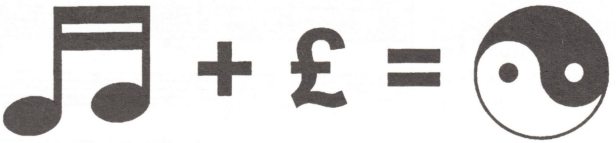
DESCENSION - Live, March 1995 Shock SX 029 CD (CD - £11.00)
Charles Wharf; soprano sax, alto sax, bass clarinet/Stefan Jaworzyn; guitar/Simon H. Fell; double bass/Tony Irving; drums 1995 (79 mins.) "Bassist Simon H. Fell produces flawless improvisations, it seems, with an awesome regularity these days, and this is no exception. It's no easy picnic, either. The music's blistering. Just be sure to buckle yourself in." CADENCE/"A glorious cascade of music that proves it is precisely the pursuit of pure energy and dissonant thrill that can make something vital out of improvisation . . . . Aural crucifixion with so many thorn-in-flesh beauties you just have to keep playing it." Ben Watson THE WIRE/"The way Descension rearrange the building blocks of rock begs comparison with bebop's rewrite of Broadway. Simply put; music to bet your life on." Ben Watson HIFI NEWS & RECORD REVIEW



VARIOUS ARTISTS - Network Volume Two Discus 5 CD (CD - £11.00)
various musicians/composers, Includes: Howard Ingram - De-commissioned; Simon H. Fell - 55 Double Bass Players Go Apeshit; Simon Kingsley - Pause And Effect. Plus music by Yashuhiro Ohtani, John Jasnoch, Ambassador, John Russell, The Impossible, Tom & Graham, Dave Pullin & 7 Hz. 1995 (79 mins.)
"Some great moments - the contrasting guitar excursions of Yasuhiro Ohtani and John Jasnoch, Martin Klapper's domestic percussion piece and Simon Fell's 55 overdubbed basses are all excellent" Gus Garside RUBBERNECK/"The most exciting and compelling compilation you will hear for a long time NOISEGATE

QUANTITY DISCOUNTS:
3 x CDs £27.50 · ALL 5 ITEMS £42.00
All prices include postage & packing for Europe
OUTSIDE EUROPE please add £1.00 per item up to a maximum of £5.00 per order). Payment by Money Order Cheque or cash if insured in £s sterling. Or send details of your order (write, or fax us on +44 1440 707696) and we'll invoice you in the currency you specify. Credit Cards not accepted. Alternatively, please write for Bank Transfer details.

set of assessment criteria, not necessarily limited to 'finished product' or 'successful performance'. "What would happen if..." must surely be more interesting than "I can do that too..." For example, my piece **Mutual And Reciprocal Ceremonies** (Discus 1996) was a genuine experiment to find out what would happen if a certain process was carried out on certain raw-material with a certain pre-determined architecture. Unfortunately, many reviewers chose to react to the piece as if it were an improvisation, or composition for chamber orchestra, or some other 'musical' experience, and in so doing missed much of the point; the fact that the ideas involved in the process of this realisation may have been more interesting than the actual sounds that resulted (although I *might* dispute that suggestion) is not an observation which I consider particularly negative. One of the joys of experimental music is that the ideas often form as much of the substance of the work as the sounds themselves, and as a true Cageian this criticism of idea/result 'imbalance' is not one I would particularly wish to shirk. Moreover, I would assert the experimental artist's right to failure, and observe that failure is perhaps the only true sign of success in experimentalism; experimental music which 'works' as pure music is surely simply an indicator that new experiments require to be undertaken.

Although the difficulties involved in encouraging an audience to adopt a more flexible aesthetic should not be underestimated, sometimes these difficulties are exacerbated by some performing musicians' own tendency to self-censorship in what they consider to be an aesthetically 'hostile' environment, giving the audience little chance to establish a relationship with new work, and ultimately creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Mick Beck's trio, Something Else, has over the past five years made a most interesting journey from 'standard' modern jazz practice of playing (albeit freely) a series of compositions with included improvisation (see **Rear Quarters**, 1992), through extremely open free jazz and improvised music explorations (see **Start Moving Earbuds**, 1994) to a still all-too-rare synthesis of improvisation with an implicit common understanding of dozens of original compositions; compositions which may or may not appear, may or may not be developed if they do



"Recommended" WIRE
"Impressive" RUBBERNECK
"Remarkable" FOURTH DIMENSION
"Special" HI - FI NEWS
"Fresh" RESONANCE

GHOST LILY CASCADE
by MARTIN ARCHER
A document of composition, chance, electronics and improvising / playing.

ELECTRICAL SHROUD
by TRANSIENT v RESIDENT
Abrasive real time synthesis. Debut CD.

DISCUS
PO BOX 658 SHEFFIELD S10 3YR UK
ALL ITEMS £10.00 PLUS £1.00 OVERSEAS

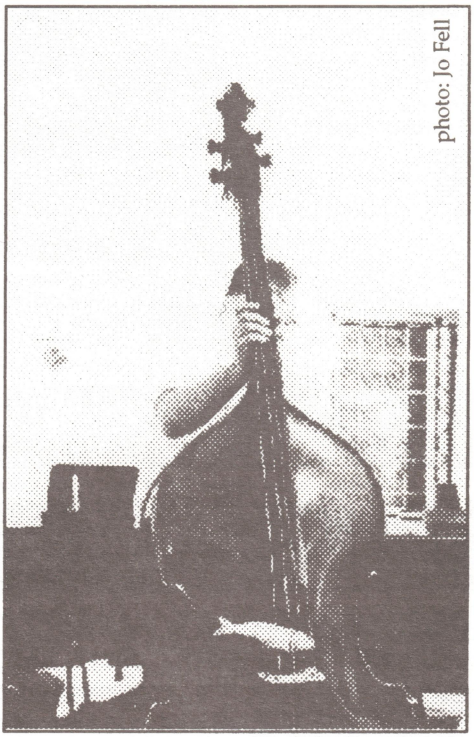
The adventurous label • The adventurous label • The adventurous label

appear, and which will never be realised in the same way twice (see **Playing With Tunes**, 1997). However, one of the most effective obstacles to realising this work has been the fear that an improvised music audience will be inherently unsympathetic to any performance which involves 'tunes'. The fear of disapproval by what can often seem to be a conservatively 'free' audience can be enough to reduce this music to a shadow of its former self (and occasionally has), thus depriving us of the opportunity to air our work, and the audience of the opportunity of proving our prejudices unfounded.

genuine experiment

Needless to say, all this talk of melody and non-purist neo-third-stream collaboration does not mean that I side myself with the post-modernist philistines who would assert that the only point of writing/performing music is for everyone to enjoy nice tunes and 'have a good time' (viz Barrington Pheloung in a recent issue of *Double Bassist*: "We have had enough squeaky gates and intellectual masturbation in modern music... I primarily write concert music for the players' enjoyment." These are the people giving masterclasses at the SPNM these days!). Rather, my wish is to reassert the modern listener's need to dismantle the accretive preconceptions of what constitutes a 'successful' example of a particular form, and return to the search for creativity and passionate innovation which probably led them to improvised and modern musics in the first place. Purism should be redirected to focus on openness to new experience, an insistence on conviction, and a tolerance of experiment (and hopefully occasional failure). Reject the unthinking and often unnecessary classification of endeavour, and the fruitless drivel created by those who seek to fulfil occasional surges of fashionable interest. Stick out for genuine experiment and music motivated by passionate belief, rather than tired habit.

In the meantime I shall return to the never-ending process of trying to shoehorn **Compilation III** into numerous wrongly-shaped pigeon-holes, embarrassedly pestering people who are interested in doing something not-quite-the-same as



I'm interested in doing, and sitting at home wondering whether being experimental is really all it's cracked up to be. Wouldn't it be better to do something *familiar* and start building a proper musical *career*? Hopefully readers will by now be overwhelmed by a seething desire to hear something creative and unpredictable; whilst I know I haven't always succeeded in achieving this aim, I'm sure you'll agree that it's a noble objective. Keep your ears open and let the explorers in! **R**

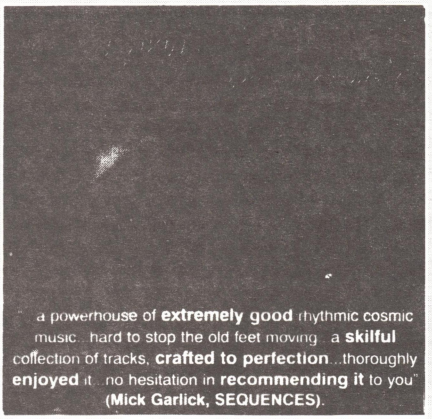
NOTE

All the recordings mentioned in the text are available from *Bruce's Fingers, 24 Chauntry Road, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8BE, England*. Please send a SAE/IRC for full details.

Section of the score for **Compilation III** reproduced on page 33, courtesy of Simon H Fell.

MARK JENKINS - "Space Dreams 2"

The sequel to the original epic "Space Dreams" CD release, compellingly blending synths, sequencers and drums into a mind-expanding series of trips through space and time. Powerful rhythms reminiscent of Mark Shreeve on "Supernova" and on "Pulsarsphere"; rolling analog sequences like Chris Franke on "Gravity Waves" and the epic "Moon Child"; swirling ambient sound textures on "Earth Is My Home"; multi-layered patterns like Robert Schroeder on "Neptune Storm" and "Rock 84001"; plus all the sonic innovation of Tangerine Dream, Vangelis or Jean-Michel Jarre on "Ancient Light" and on "Ice Planet"...even a touch of techno on "Into Orbit". Out now, "Space Dreams 2" is an instant classic of epic cosmic synthesizer music...



a powerhouse of **extremely good** rhythmic cosmic music...hard to stop the old feet moving...a **skilful** collection of tracks, **crafted to perfection**...thoroughly **enjoyed** it...no hesitation in **recommending it** to you" **(Mick Garlick, SEQUENCES).**

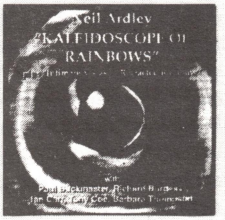
To hear extracts from "Space Dreams 2" call Testrak on 0336 408956.
Also out now: the original Space Dreams CD plus Thunder At Midnight, Mexico Rising and Analog Archives in the boxed set, Phase One, **(AMPBOX1)**, with a free biographical booklet

News, CD reviews, artist info and MIDI gear in EMIX magazine on our Website; http://www.ampmusic.demon.co.uk

In all record stores via Magnum (01494 882858); through specialists including C&D Services, Midas, Synths Direct & GFT; through Crystal Lake (France), Ardema (Germany) and Eurock (USA); in record stores internationally via Caroline Export (+44 (0)181 961 2919); or direct from Future Age Music Express, Box 387, 1A Buckingham Road, London N22 6SF, UK. Tel/Fax +44 (0)181 889 0616. Access, Visa & Mastercard taken. Testrak calls will cost no more than £2

Last in **Paul Nagle's** epic "Elements" CD series, **"Earthshaper" (AMP-CD034)** has already been hailed as his best to date...compelling melodies, smooth new age textures, driving synth patterns and fascinating atmospheres. Also available in a boxed set of four CD's, "Elements" **(AMPBOX2)**, along with a free colour biographical booklet. To hear extracts call Testrak on 0336 408957.

Neil Ardley - "Kaleidoscope Of Rainbows" (AMP-CD029), one of the most innovative albums of the '70's fuses systems music, jazz, improvisation and synths...stars Barbara Thompson, Ian Carr and Tony Coe...adds two previously unreleased all-synth tracks featuring Richard Burgess, plus a track from Neil's acclaimed "Zyklus" album. To hear extracts call Testrak on 0336 408958.



Alquimia - "Wings Of Perception" (AMP-CD028) is "unashamedly sensual...an eclectic triumph...swirling with vaporous synths, chiming guitars and ethnic percussives" (RUBBERNECK). Her music is "manically inspired ...disarmingly ingenious" (Paul Stump, THE WIRE) - the CD is ethereal, melodic yet experimental. To hear extracts call Testrak on 0336 408959.

News, CD reviews, artist info and MIDI gear in EMIX magazine on our Website; http://www.ampmusic.demon.co.uk

In all record stores via Magnum (01494 882858); through specialists including C&D Services, Midas, Synths Direct & GFT; through Crystal Lake (France), Ardema (Germany) and Eurock (USA); in record stores internationally via Caroline Export (+44 (0)181 961 2919); or direct from Future Age Music Express, Box 387, 1A Buckingham Road, London N22 6SF, UK. Tel/Fax +44 (0)181 889 0616. Access, Visa & Mastercard taken. Testrak calls will cost no more than £2 (UK only).

Prime cuts

Bobby Bradford/John Carter, Tandem 1 (Emanem 4011 CD)
Bobby Bradford/John Carter, Tandem 2 (Emanem 4012 CD)
The only commercially available duo recordings from two highly accomplished musicians whose fortune it has been to remain on the periphery of the free jazz world. Both men grew up in the Fort Worth/Dallas area in the 1950s (though they didn't meet until Ornette Coleman put them in touch with one another in the 1960s); both chose to teach music, and they each here play instruments not common in contemporary jazz: Bradford the cornet and Carter the clarinet. Most of the material on these two CDs was recorded at a 1982 concert with the balance dating from a performance three years earlier. As well as performing together in a group since the mid-60s the two had apparently rehearsed as a duo for many years before these recordings.

Slap one of these CDs in the machine and what leaps out immediately at the listener is the originality of Carter's playing: he was a clear-headed improvisor with awesome control of his instrument. Never unduly burdened with history, his compacted solo contributions (particularly the wonderful 'Les Masses Jigaboos') are dense and brilliant pieces of music, pushing at the boundaries of the instrument and jammed full of melodic zest. The bluff and pithy Bradford is less ambitious solo, but comes into his own in the duo pieces. In tandem, which is what this is all about after all, the pair work semi-independently, pursuing paths that diverge and continually cross and re-cross in unexpected ways. The two-voice format is a challenging one over the duration of even one CD, but the music amply rewards the concentration — thoughtful free music, buzzing with invention. Carter died in 1991. It's a crying shame he recorded so rarely. (*Emanem, c/o Martin Davidson, 3 Bittacy Rise, Mill Hill, NW7 2HH, England*)
Will Montgomery

Terry Riley and Stefano Scodanibbio, Lazy Afternoon Among the Crocodiles (AIAI 008 CD)
Indian Ragas, and indeed much Arabic and Eastern music, is preceded by an *alap*, a slow movement that sets the mood and allows the ear to adjust to the particular scale equivalent or raga to be used. The feel of this album, apart from a short percussive interlude, is one of an extended *alap*. Scodanibbio tunes his bass and employs 12 harmonics which determine the scale to which Riley's synthesiser is tuned. The pulse is slow and explores the rich timbral resources of the bass with elaborations from the keyboards. To call it minimalist would, however, miss the point. Despite his historic tag as a composer Riley has always seen himself much more as a player and his style owes much to his studies with the Indian singer Pandit Pran Nath. Scodanibbio has also been influenced by Indian music and his playing is reminiscent of the sarangi. What results is a curiously rich, and short (a mere 25 minutes), set of three pieces — two improvisations and one composition by Scodanibbio. (*AIAI distributed by ReR Megacorp — 0181 771 1063*)
Gus Garside

Josep Vallribera & Tony Moore, Assessments And Translations (Matchless MRCD 28 CD)
Cornelius Cardew, Piano Music: 1959-70 (**John Tilbury**: piano) (Matchless MRCD 29 CD)
The problem of interpreting the graphic score that is totally indeterminate as to its performance has been with us for decades now. It reappears here with Vallribera and cellist Moore: how do we apportion creative contribution? Is Vallribera even a composer? His scores resemble early Pollocks; Moore's interpretations sound like multitracked improvisations. But they aren't collective improvisations, of course, since whilst subsequent Tonys can react to the ones that have gone before, the latter can't react to the new improvisations. I've always found such approaches to improvisation

New on compact disc

SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE

***4015*: "Quintessence 1"** ***4016*: "Quintessence 2"** (1973-4) *reissues plus*

The fabulous 85-minute concert by JOHN STEVENS, DEREK BAILEY, KENT CARTER, EVAN PARKER & TREVOR WATTS - plus unexpected trio & duo music.

NIGEL COOMBES & STEVE BERESFORD

***4017*: "Two to Tangle"** (1997) The most radical violin & piano duo in about 200 years.

Other superb Compact Discs are still available

DEREK BAILEY *solo guitar*

***4001*: "Domestic & Public Pieces"** (1975-7) *reissue* ***4013*: "Lace"** (1989)

ANTHONY BRAXTON & DEREK BAILEY

***4006*: "First Duo Concert"** (1974) *reissue*

JOHN CARTER & BOBBY BRADFORD

***4011*: "Tandem 1"** ***4012*: "Tandem 2"** (1979/82) *clarinet & cornet*

STEVE LACY - *4004*: "Weal & Woe" (1972-3) *reissue - solo & quintet*

EVAN PARKER & PAUL LYTTON

***4002*: "Three Other Stories"** (1971-4) ***4009*: "Two Octobers"** (1972-5)

JOHN RUSSELL & ROGER TURNER - *4010*: "Birthdays" (1996)

PAUL RUTHERFORD & PAUL ROGERS - *4007*: "Rogues" (1988)

ROGER SMITH - *4014*: "Unexpected Turns" (1993-6) *solo guitar*

SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE

***4005*: "Summer 1967"** JOHN STEVENS & EVAN PARKER + PETER KOWALD.

***4003*: "Face to Face"** (1973) JOHN STEVENS & TREVOR WATTS *reissue plus*

***4008*: "Hot & Cold Heroes"** (1980/91) STEVENS, NIGEL COOMBES & ROGER SMITH

MARTIN DAVIDSON 3 BITTACY RISE MILL HILL NW7 2HH ENGLAND

Distributed in Britain by HARMONIA MUNDI

In preparation

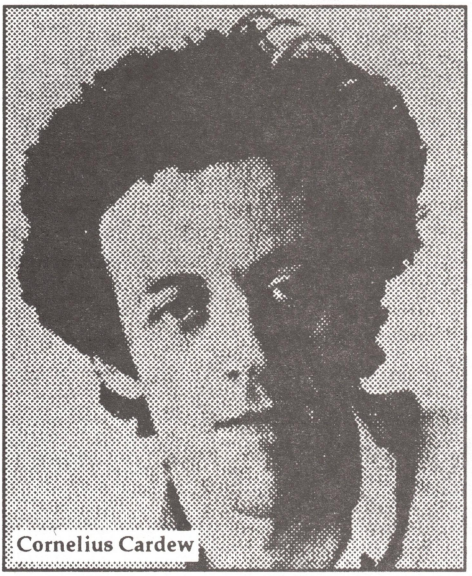
PAUL RUTHERFORD & ISKRA 1912 "Sequences 72 & 73" (1972-4)

Two compositions for a dozen improvisers

featuring Bailey, Guy, Nicols, Oxley, Parker, Riley, Watts, Wheeler, Winstone et al.

PAUL RUTHERFORD "The Gentle Harm of the Bourgeoisie" (1974)

The definitive solo trombone album - *reissue plus*


Cornelius Cardew

problematic. Does the intention change this? Is it possible to hear this music as an interpretation of a score? How does that change what we hear?

The Cardew set largely avoids the problematic, since only one of the pieces (an extract from **Treatise**) is entirely indeterminate. Others offer the performer a range of freedoms, but there is always musical material at the heart of each piece. As anyone familiar with Cardew's work will recognise, the pieces precede his boiler-plate Stalinist embarrassments of the 1970s, such as those pseudo-populist songs composed on Party instructions for the People's Liberation Music. What we have instead are a substantial number of pieces from the body of work that Cardew subsequently renounced as bourgeois. The combination of virtuoso writing and radical experiments in performance interpretation that Cardew offered is breathtaking. In John Tilbury he has a powerful interpreter who is equally gifted in both of these respects. His multitracking on the remarkable 'Volo Solo' is utterly successful here and whilst it doesn't quite achieve Cardew's hope that "the instrument should seem to be breaking apart" (you'd need Borbetomagus on the piano to get close), the superimposition of two versions fulfils a formal need that Moore's interpretations of Vallribera lacks. (*Matchless Recordings, 2 Shetlock's Cottages, Matching Tye, nr Harlow, Essex, CM17 0QR, England*)
Chris Atton

The Mat Maneri Trio, Fever Bed
(Leo Lab CD022 CD)
Michael Jefrey Stevens & Mark Feldman, Haiku
(Leo Records CD LR 225 CD)
The Michael Jefrey Stevens/Dominic Duval Quintet, Elements
(Leo Records CD LR 241 CD)
Three CDs arrive together; on the strength of his work with his old man, Joe, I pick out the Mat Maneri Trio for first play. And I'm not disappointed. In translating Joe Maneri's methodology onto the six string electric violin Mat has developed an intriguing, sensual and instantly recognisable approach. Via a combination of chromaticism skewed with microtones and delivered with deft use of a volume pedal to affect attack and decay he creates slurred lyrical music. His qualities are thrown into sharp focus here with two very strong associates. Randy Peterson's mastery of complex time is insinuated, leaving spaces wide open and Ed Schuller's big-sounding, authoritative bass superbly complements Maneri's lines.

On **Haiku**, once again it is the violinist who steals the show; here in the hands of the virtuosic Mark Feldman. Feldman inhabits that area of European classical style enlivened by the keening robust and flamboyant Jewish approach to the instrument. Both he and pianist Stevens contribute strong compositions. The emphasis is on melody but timbral and harmonic complexity ensure that this is a richly rewarding experience.

Stevens again crops up on **Elements**, here as co-leader with one of Cecil Taylor's regional bassists Dominic Duval. This is improvised, although each track is approached with some forethought that at times feels contrived. Each player is given a turn to introduce a piece — particularly fine when it falls to one of the leaders. Duval is, as one might expect, a damn fine player and Stevens contributes a beautiful incandescent solo track. Dom Minasi provides jazz-styled guitar and Mark Whitecage a wistful alto sax. Drummer Jay Rosen leads the group into an AACM style vocal piece.

O.O. Discs

ACT OF FINDING DEREK BAILEY JOSEPH CELLI ALVIN CURRAN ROBERT DICK MORTON FELDMAN KEN FIELD DAVID FIRST FIRST AVENUE ARTTHUR JARVINEN JOAN LABARBARA ORLANDO GARCIA MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN STEVE GORN SHELLEY HIRSCH FRED HO ELEANOR HOVDA JERRY HUNT JIN HI KIM ELODIE LAUTEN GEORGE LEWIS CHRIS MANN PHILL NIBLOCK PAULINE OLIVEROS NEIL ROLNICK NED ROTHENBERG FREDERIC RZEWSKI GREGG SMITH SINGERS IAN WILLIAMS JEFF SONG MATT TURNER KAZUE SAWAI YUKO TAKAHASHI AKI TAKAHASHI LOIS VIERK ZEITGEIST ACT OF FINDING DEREK BAILEY JOSEPH CELLI ALVIN CURRAN ROBERT DICK MORTON FELDMAN KEN FIELD DAVID FIRST FIRST AVENUE ARTTHUR JARVINEN JOAN LABARBARA ORLANDO GARCIA MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN STEVE GORN SHELLEY HIRSCH

Post-Minimal

Robert Ashley

improvisation

Asian Imports

CALL OR SEND FOR A FREE CATALOG

O.O. Discs

261 Groovers Avenue Black Rock CT 06605 USA

voice: 203-367-7917 Fax: 203-333-0603

http: //www.hear.com/o.o./

There's plenty on offer but it was the leaders who held my ear and when, close to the end, we get a track with just these two, I longed for a duo album. (*Leo Records/Leo Lab, The Cottage, 6 Anerley Hill, London, SE19 2AA*)
Gus Garside

Morphogenesis, Charivari music
(Paradigm Discs PD 02 CD)
Michael Prime, Cellular Radar
(Mycophile Records SPOR 01 CD)
Those who have experienced Morphogenesis in live performance should be gratified to find that these six recordings (only one of which was made before an audience) are fine examples of their extraordinary and intense sound research. Anyone new to the group but interested in live electronics, found objects, and environmental sound (a gross oversimplification) could well find this disc a useful starting-point. All the pieces, bar one, last 10 minutes or over; the closing piece, the live recording (1994 LMC Festival) is the longest at 17 minutes. The length factor is important: although a remarkably diverse range of sounds is produced, each of the pieces shares the same relentless search for new sonorities, and even the shortest piece seems as if part of a pattern of work that could last for many hours. Comparisons with related ensembles are pretty futile: Morphogenesis are just working in a different lab in a different part of the building, that's all.

Group member Michael Prime has a particular interest in combining organic and environmental tapes with stringed objects, with water machine sounds, and with his "bio-activity translator", which picks up electrical field activity in plants, fungi and humans. His solo disc is not as rewarding to these ears, partly because the musical activity — in some very long pieces — tends to be broken into blocks or episodes of a few minutes' duration, before he moves on. Given that he is a solo performer, and not interacting with five other individuals, that may seem a rather pedantic criticism; it's just that I prefer the group sound. Prime nonetheless produces an extraordinary range of natural and treated textures: good on a Sunday morning with the birds singing and the neighbour hoovering. (*Paradigm Discs, 9 Thane Mansions, Thane Villas, London N7 7PE / Mycophile Records, 30 Petten Grove, Orpington, Kent, BR5 4PU, England*)
Gerard F Tierney

Dave Holland, Ones All
(veraBra records/Intuition Music & Media vBr 2148 2 CD)
Mark Dresser, Invocation
(Knitting Factory Works KFW 173 CD)
Okay, let's face it: even when considering the meagre sales of any album which consists of solo performances (not talking about Keith Jarrett), solo bass records reach pretty low (no pun intended) and are generally considered to be the province of other bass players; and so, gems like Barre Phillips' **Camouflage** (still available on Victo, by the way) go totally unnoticed. Dave Holland's **Ones All** will offer a lot of joy to those who think that his immense intelligence and musical sensibility are not always best presented in a group context. A clear thinker, technically at the top of his game, helped by a warm, clear recording technique, Holland offers a varied program — a mix of originals and covers — in which the jazz lineage is pretty evident without ever becoming a burden.

From Braxton to Zorn, bassist Dresser has played with quite a few quality people, besides co-leading Arcado and Tambastics. On **Invocation** (subtitled 'Music For Contrabass') he intelligently uses the sonic resources of the instrument with results which are, indeed, moving. This album is more for people who like electronic music than for those who like to follow the changes of a tune. Deep, intense but never 'difficult' with interesting manipulations and co-composer credits by Lamont Wolfe, **Invocation** is a masterpiece. Buy a few copies for your friends. (*veraBra records/Intuition Music & Media, P.O. Box 27 02 26, 50508 Cologne, Germany / Knitting Factory Works, 74 Leonard Street, New York, NY 10013, USA*)
Giuseppe Colli

Elton Dean Quintet, Silent Knowledge
(Cuneiform Rune 83 CD)
Elton Dean Quartet + Roswell Rudd, Rumours Of An Incident (Slam CD223 CD)
The Dean renaissance continues and with this quintet recording comes further proof of the growing interest across the Atlantic for British

AMBIANCES MAGNÉTIQUES

l'autre musique du Québec

new releases

FRED FRITH GUITAR QUARTET
Ayaya Moses
AM 051CD

The Quartet présents it's first cd whith works of Claude Vivier, Olivia Gignardi and original compositions by the ensemble.

JEAN DEROME
Hommage à Georges Perec
AM 044CD

Radio tribute for 13 musiciens, a retrospective of French popular music of the 50's and 60's. From Ray Ventura to Henri Salvador. Congas, vibraphone, tapdanse and yéyé.

ROBERT M. LEPAGE
La plante humaine
AM 042 CD

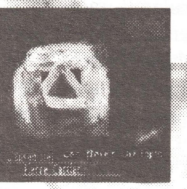
The soundtrack of Pierre Hébert's animation film: La plante humaine. This is a symphonic rendition of the lyrical work, a non-stop version of the framented pieces in the film.

A sound polaroid of label Ambiances Magnétiques' releases and re-issues from '95 to 97.

VARIOUS ARTISTES
Hourra pour la bastringue
AM 045 CD

A collection of songs in a pensive mood, illuminated by modern counterpoint with a progessive rock edge. Reissued on compact disque.

Pierre Cartier
Les fleurs du tapis
AM 043CD



Brilliantly interpreted by a jazz line-up of undeniable complicity, the eloquence and elegance of this music demonstrates Pierre Cartier's great sense of melody.

ANDRÉ DUCHESNE
Le temps des bombes
AM 002CD

Available by mail-order • a new address:
Distribution Ambiances Magnetiques Etcetera
4580 av. de Lorimier, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H2H 2B5
t. 514.526.6849 f. 514.526.4487 e. dame cd@cam.org

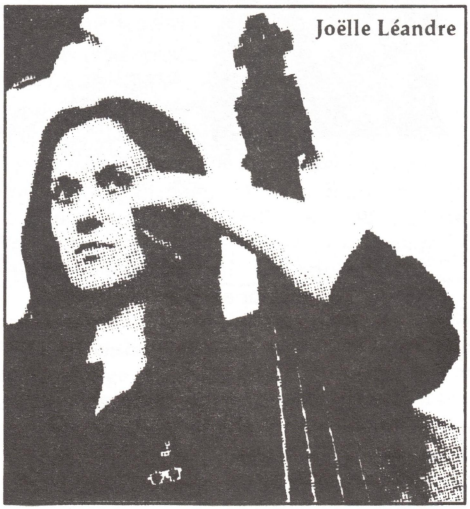
dame

visibilité accrue grâce à la SODEC

improvised music. Continuing his fruitful partnership with Paul Dunmall he adds the established trio of Sophia Domancich, Tony Levin and Paul Rogers. Both saxophonists are on top of their game throughout but it is in the almost surprisingly traditional 'ballad' pieces where Dean is at his finest. The rawer, more aggressive pieces might be mere 'going through the motions' if it were not for pianist Domancich, who seems to make it her business to temper the fierier leanings of her colleagues, thus providing an unusually transparent quality to these ensemble sections. For all the obvious strengths of the two horn players it is the intricate, knowing interplay of the rhythm section that makes for this record's finest moments.

The woefully short visit of great American trombonist Rudd earlier this year produced some of the most refreshing and vital improvised music I have heard for years. It also produced two recordings; this one and another to be released by Cuneiform. Rudd is partnered by a quartet that mixes old and new generations of British improvisors. Dean, as on the quintet recording, is in fine form providing an ideal partner for the trombonist. The relationship between horns and rhythm section of Mark Sanders, Alex Maguire and Marcio Mattos is perhaps less hierarchical than on the Quintet disc but their interplay as a section is no less engaging. People will not have heard Rudd in this kind of context for many years. The long wait has been well worthwhile; his passionate, expansive style and succulent sound are utterly compelling. For reasons of its blurring of national styles as well as its consummate musicality this may well turn out to be one of the most important recordings that Dean has yet produced. (*Cuneiform Records, P.O. Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD, 20907-8427, USA / Slam Productions, 3 Thesiger Road, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 2DX, England*)
Bruce Coates

Lauren Newton & Joëlle Léandre, 18 Colors
(Leo Records CD LR 245 CD)
Polly Bolton & Paul Dunmall, View Across The Bay (PBB 03 CD)
If, Bwana, 33Birdswent
(Pogus Productions P21007-2 CD)
18 Colors is a labyrinth of codes, a cryptogram of sounds. The titles are beautiful, imaginative reworkings of paint names — 'Fiery Chromoxide Green', for example — just as this duo represents a reconfiguration of the parameters of bass and voice. But the titles also refer to artists (irresistible 'Ryman White'; 'Stella Black') or with 'Raw Umber' then 'Burnt Ochre' nod in appreciation


Joëlle Léandre

to Mingus. The constant utterance of "Go on, Going on" during 'Dragon Blood' brings Beckett to mind and connects back to Robert Ryman who collaborated on Beckett's book *NoHow On*. A track on which Lauren Newton uses a text about TS Eliot's poetry is bizarrely called 'Cleciolina Pink' (and if there's a connection there I'd like to know about it). The music is contorted and surprising, alarming and amusing. Newton's voice is immensely versatile, capable of evoking a multitude of identities — storyteller, maniac, sensualist, bee. Léandre's bass playing, particularly her arco work, has a precise intensity and a provocative aptness throughout. Together they coil around each other, skating and skittering, scatting and scarifying.

Polly Bolton is not as experienced a vocal improvisor as Lauren Newton and her singing can seem quite tentative, especially as many of the tracks are two minutes or less, a length which leaves several potentially interesting pieces undeveloped. More risk-taking and less refinement would be welcome, particularly on a track like

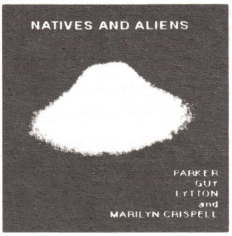
LEO RECORDS

Music for the inquiring mind
and the passionate heart

LEO RECORDS NEW RELEASES

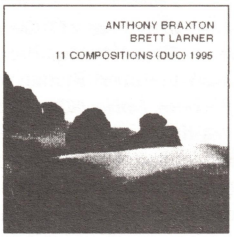
CD LR 235/236
(double)
STARDUST FROM TOMORROW
SUN RA & HIS INTERGALAXTIC ARKESTRA

This double CD is the rest of Sun Ra's performance in Ulrichsberg, Austria, on April 29, 1989. The first part of the performance was released by Leo Records in 1995 under the title "Salute to Walt Disney". A must for all Sun Ra followers.



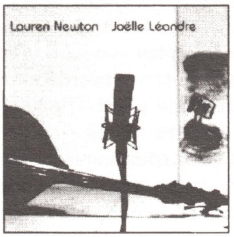
CD LR 243
NATIVES AND ALIENS
PARKER/GUY/ LYTTON AND MARILYN CRISPELL

As Stuart Broomer writes in his liner notes for this release, an added voice of Marilyn Crispell is never simply additive. The piano changes the structures of the trio's music, and the quartet gets a mind of its own. The CD was recorded in London in May 1996. On the way from Belgium to London, Marilyn, Barry and Paul saw a huge flying object hovering in the distance. Needless to say the recording session was significantly influenced by this event. 11 improvisations, over 69 minutes of music.



CD LR 244
11 COMPOSITIONS (DUO) 1995
ANTHONY BRAXTON / BRETT LARNER

"Braxtonian adventure in time and space" – this is how Graham Lock subtitles his liner notes for this CD. It takes 79 minutes to journey through the music, with Braxton playing flute, clarinet, contra-alto, contrabass and soprano clarinets, sopranino, alto and F saxophones. How do his sounds blend with koto? Braxton has always wanted to record with this special instrument. The CD is very different from the recent Leo Records releases where Braxton has been playing jazz standards.



CD LR 245
18 COLORS
LAUREN NEWTON / JOELLE LEANDRE

18 colors are 18 compositions exploring the link between sounds and colors. Two divas of the new music take an almost impossible task of attempting the "rapprochement" of different art forms.Having seen the performances of this extraordinary duo, the fans of Lauren Newton and Joelle Leandre have been waiting for this CD with impatience. 65 minutes of sheer delight.

MAILORDER PRICES: *One CD - £10.00; Two CDS - £18.00; Three CDs - £25.00; Four CDs - £32.00;*
P &P £1.00 with every order. *Payment by Cheques, Postal Orders, International Money Orders, Eurocheques to:*
Leo Records, The Cottage, 6, Anerley Hill, London SE19 2AA.

'Maguire's Jig' where her lilting lacks the rawness of traditional Irish singing. With Paul Dunmall playing numerous reed instruments, this music is often pleasant and gently bucolic in tone, but mostly hints at a better recording yet to be made.

Ellen Christi has worked with William Parker, Carlo Actis Dato and other great improvisors, but with If, Bwana her voice is used in purely textural form as part of Al Margolis' electronic processing of natural sounds and musical instruments. As each piece develops, he stacks and overlaps jagged splinters of sound, mixed with a voice which, with or without words, helps locate and humanize an isolated, mesmerising soundworld. (*PBB Records, Burnt House, The Yeald, Clee St. Margaret, via Craven Arms, Shropshire, England / Pogus Productions, P.O. Box 150022, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215-0022, USA*)
Declan O' Driscoll

Rick Wilson, Suitable Language
(Third Force TFCD 001 CD)
Tom Recchion, Chaotica
(Birdman Records BMR-007 CD)
Herve Castellani, Deux Silences
(Metamkine MKCD 022 CD)
Dominique Petitgand, 10 Petites Compositions Familiales (Metamkine MKCD 021 CD)
In the sleevenotes to **City Of Refuge**, John Fahey excoriates persons unknown for describing his music as 'New Age'. Perhaps Rick Wilson will do the same to me, but 'New Age' — along with the equally pernicious term 'ambient' — best describes his first solo CD. Wilson used to drum with The Work and here he's joined by another ex -Worker, Tim Hodgkinson, along with, amongst others, Gareth Williams (ex-This Heat). The music is, as you'd expect, driven by percussion, largely multi-tracked, and uses lots of samples. It's beautifully executed, shimmeringly produced, not a note out of place. And that's why I find it unsatisfying. It's like those tapes that Gabrielle Roth sells to practice her Five Rhythms dance therapy to: even the wild, chaotic pieces are too polite to move you. Now if Wilson, Hodgkinson and Williams had made a rock album, why they could have become an ELP for the 90s — that *would* have been interesting...

Tom Recchion used to be in bands with great names like the Doo-Dooettes and the Pre-Cambrian Three, but here he offers a CD of a clutch of tape-loop experiments he recorded in the mid-80s. Not raw loops, though, but treated and mixed, then overlaid with keyboards and found sounds. Nice idea, and certainly more abrasive than Wilson's work, but still lacking for me. A nice touch — in principle — is his use of records as chance material for 'solos', the only truly improvised element here. But even these fail to charge the music with any energy and, despite its title, it's still too polite.

Look, Metamkine could release mice coughing as *musique concrète* and I'd still go for it. No, that's not strictly true, but here we have two more mini-CD additions to their *Cinema pour l'orielle* series. Herve Castellani throws up a couple of menacing landscapes; trips down a malevolent country lane where the grotesquely-squeaking single wheel of some awful agricultural machine heralds thunderstorms and mayhem. Bringing it all back home, Dominique Petitgand splices a few casual words from various family members (grandmothers, aunts and children) into cosy backgrounds that somehow imbue the banal with enchantment. Both succeed in doing what *musique concrète* does so well — making the normal appear numinous. (*Third Force, 29 Gleneldon Road, London SW16 2AX / Birdman Records, 1409 W. Magnolia, Burbank, CA 91506, USA / Metamkine, 50 Passages des Ateliers, 38140 Rives, France*)
Chris Atton

Cecil Taylor Ensemble, Always A Pleasure
(FMP CD 69 CD)
Simultan Quartett, Speech
(For 4 Ears Records CD 719 CD)
With Cecil Taylor, ideas don't so much develop as replace each other in rapid succession. Listening to him is a bit like watching someone rummaging at great speed. You're anxious to know what he's looking for and transfixed by the process. This presents problems for collaborators and the most successful have been those whose aesthetic vision is as forceful and idiosyncratic as his own, say Derek Bailey or Evan Parker, or rare individuals who have got inside Taylor's music; one thinks of Jimmy Lyons or, more recently, William Parker. However at his most fertile, as he is here, Taylor

LEO RECORDS

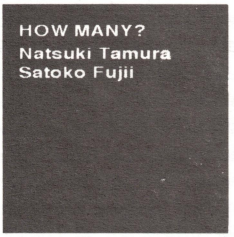
Music for the inquiring mind
and the passionate heart

LEO LAB

LEO RECORDS LABORATORY SPRING 1997

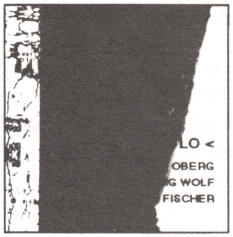
LEO LAB CD 028
PSALMS & ELEGIES
AARDVARK JAZZ ORCHESTRA

This is the second CD by the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra on Leo Lab. The orchestra is being led by the composer/pianist/trumpeter Mark Harvey. The music is deeply spiritual, for it speaks about life, people, experiences, joys, sorrows, etc... Three out of four long pieces are elegies for specific people, the fourth one moves from elegaic towards the epic. Duration is over 76 minutes.



LEO LAB CD 029
HOW MANY?
NATSUKI TAMURA – trumpet,
SATOKO FUJII – piano

Natsuki Tamura and Satoko Fujii are Japanese living in New York. They've been playing together for over ten years. In their music they create a musical world filled with form and feeling, serenity and surprise, and each piece of their music achieves its own special character. The CD consists of 14 pieces, duration is about 65 minutes.



LEO LAB CD 030
> LO <
UWE OBERG – piano,
GEORG WOLF – bass,
JORG FISCHER – drums

The trio was founded in 1994 with the intention of playing pulsating, earthy music as well as soar up in spheres of choice fragility. The title of the CD suggests zen's image ("Lo! The mountain flows across the water"), and the music really flows with integrity and conviction creating the atmospheric wholeness. There are 8 pieces on the CD, duration is over 60 minutes.

LEO LAB CD 031
ORCA
COLLECTIVE 4tet

"Collective 4tet" is Heinz Geisser – drums, Mark Hennen – piano, Jeff Hoyer – trombone, and William Parker – bass. This is their second CD on Leo Lab; the first one, Ropedancer, received some outstanding reviews. Collective 4tet is destined to become a super group. As Ben Watson writes in his liner notes, when this group plays "the history of jazz is still being made". There are seven pieces on the CD, duration is 71'50.

LEO LAB CD 032
CARLOS BECHEGAS PROJECTS

Carlos Bechegas is a Portugese flutist who explores sounds with the help of electronics. First half of his CD has been recorded with his trio IK*Zs(3), the second half is his solo with electronics. Both alone and with his group he plays "structured improvisations" trying to find and develop his own voice on his instrument. There are eleven pieces on the CD, duration is 75'56.

MAILORDER PRICES:

One CD - £10.00;
Two CDS - £18.00;
Three CDs - £25.00;
Four CDs - £32.00 ;
P &P £1.00 with every order.
Payment by Cheques, Postal Orders, International Money Orders, Eurocheques to:
Leo Records, The Cottage, 6, Anerley Hill, London SE19 2AA.

drives fellow musicians to the edge. Particularly rewarding here with Tristan Honsinger (cello) and Charles Gayle (tenor sax). Both saxophonists (Harri Sjostrom is on soprano) whip up a storm, but there is most substance to Gayle. Sirone (bass), Longineu Parsons (trumpet) and Rashid Bake (drums) complete a strong ensemble that is led by Taylor in formidable form. I haven't heard an album by him as good as this for some time.

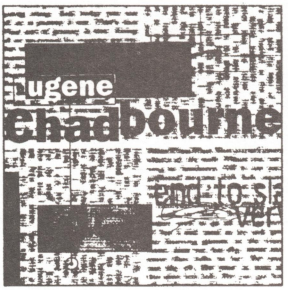
The Simultan Quartett is a markedly European affair ('improvised music' less in the jazz tradition), pointillistic and living in the moment. Detlof Drees (piano), Gunter Heinz (trombone), Klaus Koch (bass) and Andreas Nordheim (cornet) take their time to let the music live, each laying out for long periods then jumping in, twisting it in a new direction. Koch galvanises the best action, making the most of what is happening and adding an urgency that is often lacking in his absence. (*FMP distributed by Cadillac — 0171 278 7391 / For 4 Ears Records, Steinechtweg 16, CH-4452 Itingen, Switzerland*)
Gus Garside

Hoosegow, Mighty
(Tradition & Moderne T&M 008 CD)
Haco, Haco
(ReR HACO 1 CD)
Amy X Neuburg & Men, Utechma
(Racer Records 1009 CD)
One way or another, three albums of songs. Something I'm very partial to is 'avant-garde' musicians playing more traditional genres: when acting for the right reasons, they usually bring a fresh, inventive perspective to the material (does anybody remember the Frith-Kaiser guitar duets of the Skip James numbers on **Who Needs Enemies?**). Hoosegow is comprovisor, inventor and, yes, guitarist Elliott Sharp's project with vocalist Queen Esther; following Sharp's **Terraplane** (Homestead, 1994) here the duo offers their perspective on the blues, being fairly faithful to the source, never resorting to mimicry — I mean, this is not Beefheart's reinvention, but it ain't no Robert Cray, either. Queen Esther's voice is soulful and funky, Sharp's guitars inventive and versatile, getting positively nasty on 'Intuition' and offering a few Steve Cropper licks (think 'Soul Man') on 'Over My Shoulder'.

Haco's CD is a very different can of sushi — and my let-down of the year. Maybe my expectations doomed this project from the start, so, as usual, check this one yourself. Haco was the vocalist and main force behind the Japanese group After Dinner; their first album, **After Dinner** (ReR, 1984) later re-released with additional material as **Editions**) was a fresh combination of melodic songs and clever studio work; the straighter **Paradise Of Replica** (RecRec, 1989) had its charm. Instead, this latest project sounds strangely without much personality or direction, with dated drum sounds and a bass player who leaves a lot to be desired with regards to his timbre and his choice of notes. A few guests lend a helping hand (Samm Bennett, Peter Hollinger, Tom Cora) without adding too much. In my opinion, a puzzling choice for ReR.

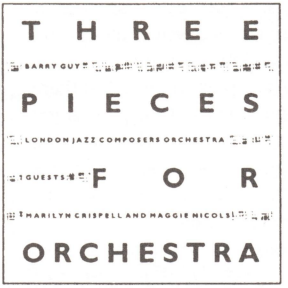
Oakland-based Amy X Neuburg & Men's **Utechma** is an album I really liked. Accessible but deep, timbrally inventive, electronic/rhythmic but not stiff; nice songs, smart lyrics, well played, well sung. A lot of humour, too, and a clever role-

INTAKT CD's, Write for catalogue: Intakt, P.O. Box 468, CH 8024 Zürich, Switzerland



Eugene Chadbourne
End Of Slavery

Eugene Chadbourne, g/voice/banjo

Intakt CD 047

Barry Guy LJCO
Three Pieces For Orchestra

With Guests: Maggie Nicols, Marilyn Crispell, & Evan Parker, Trevor Watts, Marc Charig, & others.

Intakt CD 045

Irène Schweizer
Many And One Direction

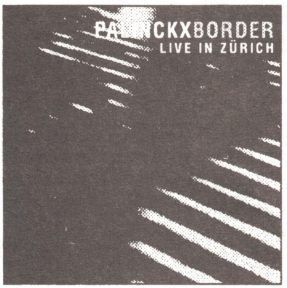
Irène Schweizer, piano solo.

Intakt CD 044

Barry Guy LJCO
Ode

Derek Bailey, Harry Beckett, Evan Parker, Trevor Watts, Mike Osborne, Tony Oxley, & others.

2 CD-Box
Intakt CD 041



Palinckx
Border – Live in Zürich

Jacques Palinckx, g; Joost Buis, tb; Cor Fuhler, keyb; Bert Palinckx, b; Jim Meneses, dr.

Intakt CD 043

Koch-Schütz-Studer
Hardcore Chambermusic

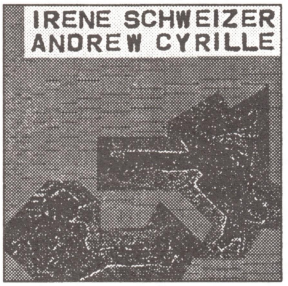
Hans Koch, sax/cl; Martin Schütz, el-cello; Fredy Studer, dr/perc.

Intakt CD 042

Irène Schweizer Louis Moholo

Irène Schweizer, piano & Louis Moholo, drums.

Intakt CD 006



Irène Schweizer Andrew Cyrille

Irène Schweizer, piano & Andrew Cyrille, drums.

Intakt CD 008

Distribution & Export: Intakt, P.O. Box 468, CH 8024 Zürich, Switzerland, Fax 0041 1 383 8233
ENGLAND: Cadillac Distribution, 67-71 Collier Street, London N1 9DF, Tel. 0171 278 7391. Fax. 0171 278 7394

playing which remanded me of Non Credo's Kira Vollman, even if aesthetically different. Besides the usual instruments (guitar, bass, keyboards) Midi mallets and Don Buchla's wireless Lightning offer variety. Too intelligent for mass consumption, but this is **Rubberneck**, right? Definitely a title which begs distribution. (*Tradition & Moderne Musikproduction, Keplerstrasse 28, 28203 Bremen, Germany /ReR Megacorp, 79 Beulah Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8JG, England / Racer Records, c/o IS Productions, P.O. Box 3856, Oakland, CA 94609, USA*)
Giuseppe Colli

Gerry Hemingway Quintet, Slamadam (Random Acoustics RA 012 CD)
Gerry Hemingway Quintet, Perfect World (Random Acoustics RA 019 CD
One of the many joys of listening to the concert recordings collected on Slamadam is the opportunity it allows — rare in avant-garde jazz — to compare two versions of a composition and the improvisations it gives rise to, for all of the tracks here have appeared on previous CDs.

When 'Waltz Anywhere' was recorded in 1991 (by a quartet which excluded the back-pain-suffering Ernst Reijseger) it had a plangent, solemn air, a meditation for Michael Moore's lightly glowing clarinet and Mark Dresser's resonant bass. Three years later, with Reijseger back on the bus, the intention of the piece has been clarified and new strength of vision leads to a deeper insight. The track 'Slamadam' remains structurally similar on recordings made one year apart, but in a piece which allows for much 'debate' between the instruments, the later version's arguments seem more articulate and complex. There is a fierce exuberance which is, as Gerry Hemingway says, "often teetering gleefully on the edge of total abandon".

Perfect World includes just one reconsideration; the track 'NT', originally recorded in the quartet formation and evincing here the enormous vitality and sensitivity Reijseger adds to this remarkable group. For the title piece, Hemingway explores his Braxton-like fascination with simultaneously combining several rhythmic pulses, without sounding anything like his sometimes boss. Here there is a greater group dynamic and sense of individuation than Braxton tends to allow. The other tracks include a richly voiced version of Ellington's 'Village Of The Virgins'; a warm, passionate kwela-style piece called 'Sinsulu Song', and 'Little Suite' which combines Hemingway's interest in electronics with space for the other four musicians to improvise into, being the kind of profound, exhilarating music which this quintet consistently creates. (*Random Acoustics, P.O. Box 301070, D-50780 Köln, Germany*)
Declan O' Driscoll

Tom Hamilton, Off-Hour Wait Station: Some Music About The Subway (O.O. Discs 0026 CD)
Graham Connah's Sour Note Six, My God Has Fleas (Rastascan Records BRD 040 CD)
Fred Ho and the Afro Asian Music Ensemble, Turn Pain Into Power! (O.O. Discs 0030 CD)
American improvisors/jazz musicians have always sought to combine improvised music with heavily notated or fixed sections, going back to the days of the big bands via Miles Davis to Mingus and beyond. Robert Ashley collaborator Hamilton has created an intriguing electronic sound environment based on the New York subway system. This provides an "aural score" with which a selection of experienced improvisors interact. Roscoe Mitchell (alto sax) Ralph Samuelson (shakuhachi), Peter Zummo (trombone) and Jonathan Haas (percussion) provide their responses individually to specified sections of the work and therefore do not directly interact with each other. Vocalist Thomas Buckner, representing a subway passenger, was given the whole recording with which to work. The finished result is a hauntingly evocative tone poem that is oddly static when one considers its source of inspiration. Within it are some individually very beautiful contributions that are particularly interesting as they are bound together only by the electronic score and Buckner's intelligent use of voice.

Connah's group present a more traditional relationship between improvisation and composition. Comparisons have been made with a tradition of jazz composition from Mingus to Sun Ra and this would seem at least partially justifiable. The virtuosic nature of the compositions provide most of the interest and unlike the music

SE

SOMETHING ELSE playing with t u n e s

SOMETHING ELSE

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE FIRST SOMETHING ELSE CD (Start Moving Earbuds); "I can't recall hearing these improvisers on better form, definitely one of the finest improv releases you're likely to hear in 1995." CHRIS BLACKFORD "There's passion, intellect and first-rate group interaction. What more can one ask from a contemporary improvising trio?" Robert Iannnapollo CADENCE "When a group plays live as well as these guys, the audience *must* be having a great time. Take a listen!" LaDonna Smith THE IMPROVISOR "Rarely has this combination sounded more inspired in recent time.," Stefan Jaworzyn MUSIC FROM THE EMPTY QUARTER " Amazing . . . . simply one of the best English improv recordings I've heard in ages." Stefan Jaworzyn SCUM LIST a WIRE record of the year (Jazz & Improvisation) 1995 "worthy to stand on a world stag.," Richard Cook THE WIRE "an album of exceptional grace and humour." Ben Watson HIFI NEWS & RECORD REVIEW "an hour's worth of exceptional English free music . . . . there's a certain spark of creativity here that makes for constantly rewarding listening. Don't miss out on it." Stefan Jaworzyn RESONANCE "This is fresh, exciting music that holds the attention and fires the i m a g i n a t i o n." J o h n E y l e s RUBBERNECK

WHAT ABOUT THE SECOND SOMETHING ELSE CD (Playing With Tunes)? Well, it's even better than the first . . . .

mick beck tenor sax **simon h. fell** double bass **paul hession** drumset

playing with tunes (CD - 73 mins.)

£11.00 EACH incl. P&P

SPECIAL TREAT: both Something Else CDs for only £16.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE & PACKING FOR EUROPE

OUTSIDE EUROPE PLEASE ADD £1.00 PER CD. PAYMENT BY MONEY ORDER, CHEQUE or CASH (if insured) in ££s STERLING. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PAY IN ANY OTHER CURRENCY, SEND DETAILS OF YOUR ORDER (write, or fax +44 1440 707689) AND WE'LL INVOICE YOU IN THE CURRENCY REQUESTED.

BRUCE'S FINGERS, 24 CHAUNTRY ROAD, HAVERHILL CB9 8BE, UK.

of the aforementioned composers the improvisors, although prodigiously talented, often don't stand out from the written material. It is perhaps the general concentration on virtuosity that means the music lacks the spark and edge of others working in a similar way. Having said this it is still a fine display of ensemble playing.

Chinese American Fred Ho's works combine some superb instrumental writing and improvisation with vitriolic political texts. The tradition of politically militant music is a long one, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra springs to mind. Whether or not the social/racial message of this music is likely to have any real political effect (apart from perhaps as a consciousness raising exercise), the blending of text and music makes its point passionately and articulately. As pure music what could have been a tricky combination of musics from several different cultures and a diverse range of instrumentation is superbly handled. Ho's work makes a significant contribution to American music that is both enjoyable (musically) and jolting (politically). (*O.O. Discs, 261 Groovers Avenue, Black Rock, CT 06605, USA / Rastascan Records, P.O. Box 3073, San Leandro, California, 94578-3073, USA*)

Bruce Coates

Eugene Chadbourne/Paul Lovens, Patrizio (Victo CD046 CD)
Xavier Charles/Jacques Di Donato, Du Slavon Glagol (Khôtkhôt K193 CD)
Oluyemi Thomas/Gino Robair, Unity In Multiplicity (Rastascan Records BRD025 CD)

What is it that makes one improv performance riveting and compelling while another is pedestrian and uninspiring? Or to paraphrase a question I am often asked by friends who do *not* enjoy improv: "How can you tell if it is any good?" My own answer to these questions includes a mixture of the following: freedom from clichés; plenty of ideas; ideas not being flogged to death; the possibility of surprises; a sense of danger; evidence that players listen to each other and react to each others' playing; a sense of disappointment when the music stops; a desire to hear it again straight away; the irrelevance of the players' reputations. These musings were prompted by these three duo performances, or rather by my

Paul Lovens

reaction to them. Each of them is wonderful, but pinning down *why* is easier said than done.

Chadbourne and Lovens were recorded live in May 1996 at Victoriaville, performing **Patrizio**, "a suite to the waiters of the world"(!). Lasting over 72 minutes, this is a gripping performance. Chadbourne performs on a range of stringed instruments, including dobro, banjo and guitar, with his usual mixture of humour and intensity. He employs feedback in one of its most creative, controlled uses I can recall. Lovens' use of the smallest, barely audible sounds is equally mesmerising.

While Chadbourne and Lovens both enjoy considerable reputations, Charles/Di Donato and Thomas/Robair are less familiar names. Xavier Charles and Jacques Di Donato play an array of reed instruments plus percussion. Their improvisations produce constantly shifting melodic and rhythmic patterns. In their playing they are seeking to create order, rather than to celebrate chaos. They do have their playful,

SLAM

Freedom of Music

SLAMCD 225 **'Desire and Liberation'** Paul Dunmall Octet with Keith Tippett, Annie Whitehead etc. Available June '97.
SLAMCD 224 **'Four Bop Drop'** -by Four Bop Drop, the Northampton based quartet and explorers of improvised music.
SLAMCD 223 **'Rumours of an Incident'** Roswell Rudd with Elton Dean Quartet - Maguire/Mattos/Sanders. An important CD.
SLAMCD 222 **'CLASSICS (live)'** Howard Riley/Art Themen Quartet. Free blowing approach to great jazz standards.
SLAMCD 221 **'Spirit of Light'** Greg Morgan & Chas Ambler
SLAMCD 220 **'First Time Ever'** Mandy Fox & Hara.
SLAMCD 217 **'Another Fine Mess'** Jon Corbett & Steve Done
SLAMCD 216 **'Early October'** the British Saxophone Quartet.
SLAMCD 215 **'Feathers with Jaki'** Howard Riley, Jaki Byard.
SLAMCD 214 **'War All The Time'** The Lazonby Group.
SLAMCD 213 **'Urban Ritual'** Ntshuks Bonga's Tshisa.
SLAMCD 212 **'Folks'** Paul Dunmall & Paul Rogers.
SLAMCD 211 **'Alison Bentley Quartet'**
SLAMCD 210 **'Entomic'** The Invisible String Quartet.
SLAMCD 307 **'Argentine Adventures Part 2'** George Haslam.
SLAMCD 306 **'Two New'** Mal Waldron & George Haslam.
SLAMCD 305 **'Waldron-Haslam'**
SLAMCD 304 **'Argentine Adventures'** George Haslam.
Available in June -
SLAMCD 308 **'SOLOS East West'** Lol Coxhill/George Haslam

SLAM CDs are distributed by Cadillac & Impetus, in USA by North Country, in Canada by Verge. Also exported by Caroline International.

Mail order:- One CD £10.00; subsequent CDs £7.00 each.
Postage £1 per order UK (£2 in Europe, £3 world). From:-

SLAM. 3, Thesiger Road, ABINGDON, OX14 2DX, England. Tel/Fax 01235 529012

anarchic side though, employing a range of squeaky things which sound like children's toys, alarm bells, etc, (what does "objets hétéroclites" mean?) to subvert the melodic lines. Good fun and good listening.

Oluyemi Thomas plays reeds plus percussion. Gino Robair (from Splatter Trio) plays percussion. They seem to take themselves far more seriously than the above two duos, almost to the point of earnestness. There is nothing flippant or playful here. Notwithstanding that, they produce excellent music. Thomas has an abrasive, staccato sax style, at times reminiscent of Albert Ayler. Robair's playing complements it perfectly, seeming to fit in around Thomas. Three great duos, all highly recommended. (*Khôkhôt, Vu d'un Oeuf, Place Maginot BP 7, 55430 Belleville-sur-Meuse cedex, France.*

John Eyles

Birgit Ulherr & Wolfgang Rithoff, Air Mail
(Hybrid CD 13 CD)
Nunc, Nunc
(2:13 Music CD002 CD)
Four Bop Drop, Four Bop Drop
(Slam CD224 CD)

The music on **Air Mail** reminds me of the approach Rachel Whiteread takes to sculpture where air becomes solid and solid form ceases to exist, noticeable only by the negative impression of its substance. Birgit Ulherr (trumpet) and Wolfgang Rithoff (percussion) turn musical convention inside out so that event, progression and climax (that nostrum of so much improvised music) are absent; an absence emphasised and critiqued by every spare, concentrated, austere sound they make. It's impossible, too, to avoid hearing a feminist argument in Ulherr's trumpet playing which stubbornly avoids the declamatory style of so many male trumpeters (though Leo Smith and John Stevens may well be influences). Together, with Rithoff's purely textural approach to percussion, this makes for enigmatic, unyielding music which is, however, engaging; its very limitations of form becoming, eventually, a compelling reason to listen.

Wolfgang Rithoff is also part of the group Nunc, but on this occasion he uses only his voice while Burkhard Beins takes over on percussion with Michael Renkel (acoustic guitar and zither) and Martin Pfleiderer (soprano and tenor) completing the line-up. Rithoff's voice dominates most of the time which is unfortunate as he lacks the fluidity and resourcefulness of Phil Minton and relies too much on guttural groanings and mutterings which distract greatly from the integrated group sound. The effectiveness of the musicians' interaction is therefore difficult to judge, but it is clear that a trio recording would have been infinitely preferable.

It's a relief then to move on to Four Bop Drop whose lyrical abstractions and switched on improvisations are consistently rewarding and purposeful. There is a great sense of uninhibited enthusiasm and adventure about this recording, and while the combination of alto, trumpet, electric guitar and fretless bass, usually playing at once, gives their music a harmolodic spirit, they avoid the clutter of Prime Time, finding instead a coherence which allows them to move easily from the caterpulted notes of 'Delighted Angels' to the Giuffre-like delicacy of 'Dusk Over Kingsthorpe'. In **Rubberneck 23** Gus Garside described their music as "comfortable" which seems unfair, suggesting that it's all a bit too easy, whereas their busy, alert playing is constantly striving to be both arresting and distinct. A feat they manage very well. (*Hybrid Music Productions, Ebelstr. 7, 6300 Giebben, Germany / 2:13 Music, c/o Burkhard Beins, Zwiestädter Str. 7, 12055 Berlin, Germany*)

Declan O' Driscoll

Kletka Red, Hijacking
(Tzadik TZ71 11 CD)
Romp, A Moment On The Air
(Parallax Records FMC 008 CD)

Hijacking comes out under the aegis of John Zorn's 'Radical Jewish Culture' push. Kletka Red is the band of Estonian and Berlin resident Leonid Soybelman (also of Ne Zhdali). He's joined in this exercise in putting klezmer music through the mangle by fellow guitarist Andy Ex (formerly of The Ex) and drummer Tony Buck. The strategy, needless to say, is a long way from original klezmer (and from the respectful update performed by clarinettist Don Byron). What we have instead is a prog-punk assault on the tradition — twitchy, scratchy guitars interlocking in sometimes complex patterns above frantic drumming. Woven

THE BEST OF CREATIVE MUSIC FROM SWITZERLAND

UNIT RECORDS

MUSICIANS' OWN RECORD LABEL!

UNIT Records, P.O. Box 1474, CH-8610 Uster, Vox & Fax 41 1 942 22 63, e-mail: unit@music.ch.
Get your free catalogue of UNIT, intakt, For4Ears, Plainisphare and many others!
UNIT Records is distributed by ReR Megacorp. Or order directly from UNIT. Only 16£/CD pp included!

UNIT ■ Pierre Favre solo, "Portrait", UTR 5004
Pierre Favre, the master of singing percussions. The most important Swiss release of 1997!

UNIT ■ Burhan Öçal–Enver Izmailov, "Kara Deniz-Black Sea", UTR 5001
Ousbekh and Tartar music with contemporary spirit.

UNIT ■ Alpine Jazz Herd, "Alpine Two", UTR 5002
A blend of Swiss mountain songs and improvisations.

UNIT ■ Sylvie Courvoisier-Marc Nauseef, "Birds of a Feather", UTR 4102
Sylvie plays the powerful piano, Marc the incredibly innovative perussions.

UNIT ■ Christine Schaller, "Drôles d'Oiseaux", UTR 4101
Christine Schaller voc, Jacques Siron b, Jean-Jacques Pedretti tb, Robert Morgenthaler tb. Emotions in music.

UNIT ■ Michel Wintsch, "Minimum Wital", UTR 4097
The most innovative composer from Geneva.

UNIT ■ Christoph Baumann's Mentalities, "An Extended Bridge Between Two Traditions", UTR 4096
Baumann, spiritual head of contemporary Swiss music, with his own project between Cuban joy and European cleverness.

UNIT ■ Peter Schärli, "April Works", UTR 4095
Heartbreaking music by trumpeter Schärli, Burhan Öçal, Fredy Studer, Glenn Ferris, Biboul Darouiche, Dom Um Romão. Excursions into Orient.

UNIT ■ Philippe Micol, "New York Interviews", UTR 4091

UNIT ■ Philippe Micol, "Improvisationsstudien", UTR 4092
Sax pure! Energy. And commitment.

UNIT ■ Scholl-Erismann-Niggli-Koch-Kowald-Frith, "NIL", UTR 4083
Improvisation at its best.

UNIT ■ Studer-Doran, "Half A Lifetime", UTR 4068 2CD
150 min. of previously unreleased music by drummer Fredy Studer and guitarist Christy Doran. 20 years of music history!

UNIT ■ Urs-Leimgruber-Fritz Hauser, "Duho", UTR 4062
Fully form-aware improvisation. Strong spirit.

UNIT ■ Kixx, "Weisser Voodoo", UTR 4058
The heritage of former East-Germany: strong music, wild textes. Gattiker-Diesner-Rudolph-Meneses.

UNIT ■ Urs-Leimgruber solo, "Goletter", UTR 4050
A sax plays a man.

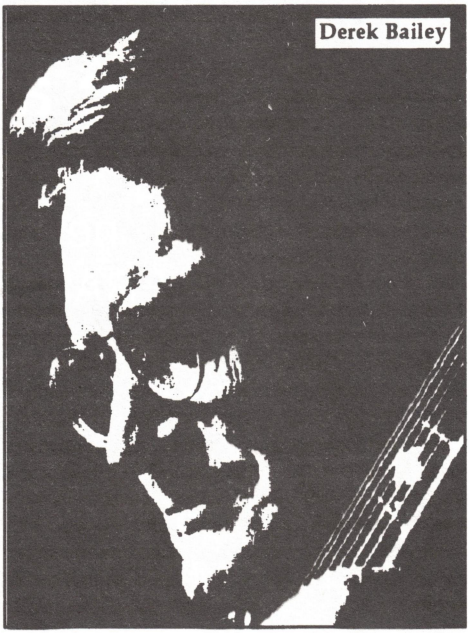
into the texture are the chattering central European melodies of klezmer, most of which are traditional pieces rearranged by Soybelman. While placid marriages of folk with contemporary Western pop forms are an absolute commonplace, this has a rare coherence. For a start, it's performed with a reassuring disrespect for purism; for another thing, it's angry, contentious music. Further, it isn't an ironic exercise: there is conviction and commitment to the peculiar hybrid spawned by Kletka Red. By turns surprising and joyous, **Hijacking** is a point where one can ponder the links between surf-punk and wedding music, or enjoy the snarl of late 70s guitar music as it is liberated from the blues and reinserted into another tradition altogether. It takes hold of 'roots' and ties them into new knots.

Another outfit to draw on post-punk sounds, Romp have put together a kind of highbrow garage rock. Not so concerned with displaying a virtuoso command of limited instrumental techniques as some Japanese groups, the trio make a kind of music that depends on strong, melodic bass lines, tricky drumming and jangly guitar inserts. Recorded onto cassette and often beginning and ending in fades, the tracks have a casual rehearsal-like feel. The music feels open-ended and unfinished, a collection of ideas thrown together but not fully realised. Nice jams to take part in, maybe, but there's no compelling reason for publishing them. However, this was recorded in 1995 and it would be good to hear what happened next in the world of Romp.

Will Montgomery

Derek Bailey/Pat Metheny/Gregg Bendian/Paul Wertico, The Sign Of 4 (Knitting Factory Works KFW 197 3CD)

The Knitting Factory website suggests this will be the most talked about CD of the year. Perhaps, for no other reason than it put Bailey at the top of the Virgin jazz chart. The celebrated and reviled duo, Richard Cook and Brian Morton, have already proposed Metheny as *the* most schizophrenic jazz artist, with the Ornette encounter being his most adventurous. So, how does his normally melodic ear attune to the guru of abstraction? By all accounts, these concerts witnessed a mass exodus of Metheny fans in search of ear plugs; and even Bailey described Metheny's arsenal of equipment



as sounding like an elephant sitting on barking dogs! His guitar synth on *In Quest Of A Solution*, (disc three) is amazing. If Bailey sounds like he has done this a thousand times — and some may say he has — it is Metheny who seems eager to win new fans.

The first disc can be ignored. No real dialogue takes place, and the laborious dissonant rock guitar is painfully monotonous; although it does make Bailey's **Saisoro** and **Arcana** recordings sound, well, like Pat Metheny. At least on disc two, there is an oasis of acoustical delight, where all four players inhabit the same musical terrain. Sadly, the biggest problem with these recordings is the percussionists Bendian and Wertico. For much of the time they sound like two Ronald Shannon Jacksons, when one would do. Hearing Tony Williams stretch into a jazzy rhythm on **Arcana** makes you want for some of that here. Their endless harmonic percussion (vibraphone, marimba, tuned drums) becomes tiring; and those splash cymbals make you yearn for Han Bennink or Paul Lovens. For all that, the second disc — *The Science Of Deduction* — sees some seamless playing by Metheny and Bailey,

s c a t t e r

new release
BEVAN FRANGENHEIM NOBLE
"twisters" (06 : CD)
£11 (includes postage)

forthcoming release
BOHMAN COULDRY EASTLEY
"divers memory" (07 : CD)

send address for information
SCATTER
(0/2) 30 CARNARVON ST.
GLASGOW G3 6HS
SCOTLAND (UK)
(fax) +44(0)141 353 2563

where their two worlds coalesce, rather than collide. Metheny seems content to not only play detuned and distorted guitar, but also to accommodate fragments of Bailey's language. (*Knitting Factory Works, 74 Leonard Street, New York, NY 10013, USA*)
Mark Greenaway

Lhasa Cement Plant, Chakra Full Of Blood (Warpodisc WD2 CD)
Thurston Moore, Piece For Jetsun Dolma (Victo CD045 CD)
Stefan Jaworzyn & Alan Wilkinson, In A Sentimental Mood (Incus CD25 CD)
The intriguingly named Lhasa Cement Plant are Donald Miller on guitar (yes, he of Borbetomagus), Brian Doherty on electronics and synths (ex-Borbetomagus), Philip Smith on bass and Stix Donnelly on drums. Given the Borbetomagus connections, this music is still remarkably approachable and (gulp) listenable. Away from the bell-to-bell sax wailings of Borbetomagus, Miller's guitar sounds rockier, although this may be due to the context rather than his playing. Certainly, this music places the guitar fixedly at the centre of proceedings. This can be a mixed blessing, for there do seem to be occasions here where Miller has little to say, but feels obliged to carry on regardless. But he does produce a wide range of sounds from his guitar with great variations of tone and dynamics between pieces. Most effective is "Piece" (Other track titles: "Cut", "Selection", "Track" and "Number". Very droll.) which features the most subdued, controlled guitar sounds.

Thurston Moore was captured live at the 13th Victoriaville Festival, in May 1996, playing with two percussionists, Tom Surgal and William Winant. Surgal is a jazz drummer with whom Moore regularly performs improv gigs around New York. Winant is an old friend of Kim Gordon's and "one of the foremost academic percussionists in America", according to Moore. Winant has played with Anthony Braxton, John Cage and Iannis Xenakis, but never with Moore before this gig. They perform two long (35 minutes and 32 minutes) pieces, both of which display a keen sense of the dynamics of live performance. They start off subdued, using barely audible sounds, then slowly build tension and increase volume. This cycle is repeated, with the percussionists providing quieter interludes before reaching climaxes. As so often with concert recordings, much of this seems geared to the live audience, not that of the CD. I wanted to be watching this performance, not just listening to it.

After the somewhat rockist guitars of Miller and Moore, the Jaworzyn/Wilkinson duo is like a breath of fresh clean improv air. Although this is again a live recording (Red Rose Club, Islington, 27/2/96), this time much of the drama and passion does transfer to disc. Jaworzyn and Wilkinson operate well within the Incus model of improvisation. The pairing of guitar and saxophone (alto or baritone) provides a more stimulating sound palette than guitar plus drums/bass/keyboards. This is a dialogue of equals. The album title is amusing, deceptive, if not downright fraudulent (*How about plain ironic, John? — Ed*); as are several of the track titles; eg, "Excerpts From A Hard Bop Blowing session", "Give A Man A Saxophone And He'll End Up Playing Jazz". This is music without sentiment, compromise or any obvious debt to rock or jazz. (*Warpodisc, Box 3491, Newport, Rhode Island 02840, USA / Victo, C.P. 460, Victoriaville, Québec, Canada G6P 6T3 / Incus Records, 14 Downs Road, London, E5 8DS*)
John Eyles

Ron Anderson, Pack Small Are Half Inch (Rastascan Records BRD 020 CD)
Doctor Nerve, Every Screaming Ear (Cuneiform Records Rune 88 CD)
This is the first time that I've listened to a Ron Anderson solo album; it's the kind of record which sounds mildly irritating and loud at any volume. This is not so strange considering his previous experiences with a group like Rat-At-Rat-R (hope I got the name right; and hope I got the man right; in fact, I'm just assuming it's the same Ron Anderson). Here he plays a bit of everything, mostly guitar, with the help of some people, mostly drummers, including William Winant and label owner Gino Robair. The Residents, Zappa, Zorn and Beefheart are some of the people this CD is said to resemble. Well, I liked the abrasive, jerky feel of the tapes — the actual performances were cut, manipulated and so on, after the fact; but next time, for my liking, I'd want a little more linear

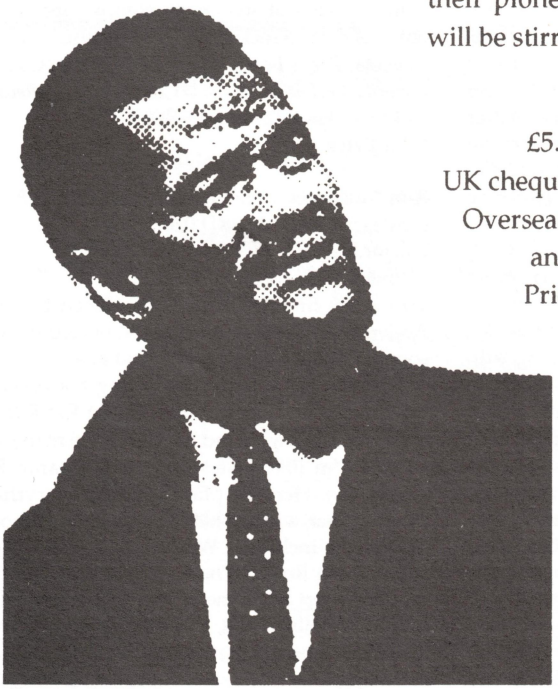
RUBBERNECK 25

Special Issue

Joe Harriott: Forgotten Father Of European Free Jazz

Edited by **Chris Blackford**

Essays by
Roger Cotterrell
TE Martin
Chris Blackford
Jack Cooke
and
Joe Harriott



The Return of Joe Harriott...

"an informative and valuable publication"
Linton Chiswick (*The Wire*)

A collection of critical, biographical and personal writings to celebrate the achievements of the great London-based, Jamaican alto saxophonist **Joe Harriott (1928-1973) and his quintet**, now very much neglected. In the hope that those organisations who have still not reissued their pioneering albums of the 1960s, will be stirred into action...

£3.50 (UK)
£5.00 (other countries)
UK cheques payable to **Rubberneck**.
Overseas readers please just send an English £5.00 note.
Price includes postage.

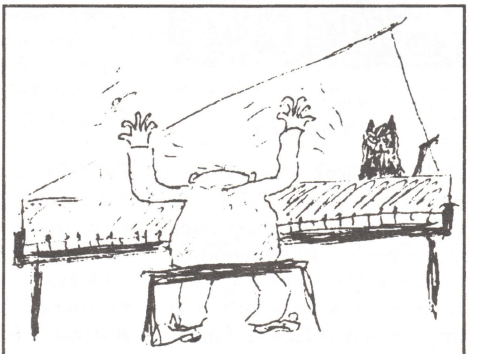
"I am not saying that Free Form will replace the music which makes up the general scene. But it will build up quite a following. It's here to stay."
— Joe Harriott

development.

Not strangers to these pages (see **Rubberneck 20**) Doctor Nerve hit the bull's eye with this work. Perfect-sounding live recordings present the group at peak form, playing the usual convoluted, martial, metallic, tight stuff. Recordings are from 1992 shows and so older than those on **Skin** (Cuneiform, 1995). Some new twists to the formula add to the variety: 'Nerveware No.8', performed by NewEar, recalls Univers Zero, another group of the 'tight but tight' variety. 'Beta 14 ok' and 'Preaching To The Converted' are played by leader / guitarist Didkovsky with the Isso Yukihiro Group — the latter composition played as an impressive exercise of flute-led metallic precision. And a cover of Beefheart's 'When It Blows Its Stacks' (from **The Spotlight Kid**), performed by the group together with the Meridian Arts Ensemble, superbly closes a very good work. **Giuseppe Colli**

Something Else, Playing With Tunes
(Bruce's Fingers BF20 CD)
Bevan/Frangenheim/Noble, Twisters
(Scatter 06 CD)
Nigel Coombes/Steve Beresford, Two To Tangle
(Emanem 4017 CD)

According to their press release, Mick Beck (tenor sax), Simon H. Fell (bass), and Paul Hession (drums), make completely improvised music. Due to an exceptionally high level of interaction, they spontaneously quote from collectively known compositions; surreptitiously smuggling in pre-conceived ideas. The title is apt, because something is always bubbling under the surface: twisting structure and abstraction. There is also an intentional framework — five 'found' musical vignettes; including church bells, ships' horns, fireworks, and a march. This evokes a sense of travel (an Eastern sounding flute appears), suggesting a cornucopia of influences waiting to emerge. Hession moves in and out of regular and free time, and is subtle, powerful, and groovy in turn. The music actually swings gloriously hard in places. Fell produces other-worldly sounds, and an elastic pulse. Beck's harmonics and slap tonguing can quickly take it out. The long tracks are the best; the framework, and some of the shorter tracks are superfluous (perhaps a drying



drawing: **Nigel Coombes**

of ideas?). The hardest swinging band in improv.

The second trio (same instrumentation) tries to perform the opposite — to stay in one place. It is a quiet, restrained encounter; hardly stormy. Scraping, scratching, squeaking, bowing, birds' singing — subtle tiny details, trying to obtain a collective voice. An exploration of sonic capabilities with only intermittent interest — Steve Noble's singing saw, Tony Bevan's (bass sax) multiphonics. Perhaps more diversity was needed, beyond the need to be diverse. However, it improves the louder it is played, and has nice church acoustics. Ghostly, not twisting.

The Coombes (violin) and Beresford (piano) CD, is refreshing, beautiful music-making. Importantly, it heralds the re-emergence of Coombes since leaving SME in 1992. He plays both arco and pizzicato; and although without the singing quality of Leroy Jenkins, or the pure tone of Mark Feldman, he is absolutely in tune with Beresford, who supplies the lyrical underpinnings. They listen like hawks, and accompany one another like twins. Exhibiting a slowly widening dynamic range with microscopic influences creeping in from other musics. Both joyous and plaintive, adventurous and sedate, and, with a sense of fun. Beresford also plays a little trumpet, prepared piano, and generally dances all over the keyboard. Contender for CD of the year. (*Bruce's Fingers, 24 Chauntry Road, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8BE, England / Scatter, (0/2) 30 Carnarvon Street, Glasgow G3 6HS, Scotland*) **R**

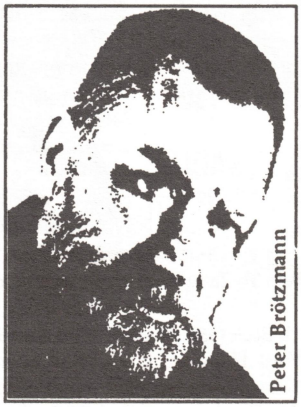
Mark Greenaway

ShortCuts

Reviewed by
Chris Blackford

Philippe Micol *New York Interviews* (Unit Records UTR 4091 CD) There's much imagination and invention to be found on Philippe Micol's **New York Interviews**, a collection of 11 improvised duets and trios recorded during the Swiss reedsman's US sojourn in late 93/early 94. Given the quality of Micol's playing, it embarrasses me somewhat to admit that this is first time I've heard him play. Born in 1955, his improv work gained momentum in the early 80s when he co-founded the "Werkstatt für Improvisierte Musik-WIM" in Bern. A soprano saxophonist, he's clearly in the Evan Parker tradition, though by no means a slavish disciple to the strategies opened up by the Briton. On 'Language At Work' with Paul Plimley (synth) and Gregg Bendian (percussion) he creates an effective barbed tension using sustained tones against their percussive fluidity; 'Responsing Without Question' features his striking, expressive leaps between panting dog, slurping mouthpiece explosions and slippery high-tone slivers, all of which contrast sharply with Jim Staley's laid-back avant-bluesy trombone. Two tracks also showcase Micol's compelling bass clarinet playing in debate with the bass and contrabass clarinets of Paul Hoskins and Michael Lytle; together they explore the seldom-heard, yet astonishingly wide registral compass of these still neglected instruments. Top-notch improv. (*Unit Records, P.O. Box 1474, CH-8610 Uster, Switzerland*)

Peter Brötzmann, *Nothing To Say: A Suite Of Breathless Motion Dedicated To Oscar Wilde* (FMP CD 73 CD); **Wolfgang Fuchs with Evan Parker & Jean-Marc Montera**, *Bits & Pieces: Solo And Duets* (FMP/OWN 90004 CD) Why the so-called wild



man of European improv, Peter Brötzmann, has dedicated his latest solo recording to that arch-dandy of Irish literature, Oscar Wilde, is unclear. A shared love of the uncompromised poetic impulse, perhaps. Track titles also suggest a Wildean orientation. First and foremost, **Nothing To Say** is about *presence* and *personality* — the presence of tone, and the powerful personality of this improvisor, and how that tone pierces the senses with every anguished cry and fragile whisper. It's said that Brötzmann's aesthetic is hewn from 'ugly', brutish sounds; not so. In fact, he's also a fine melodic, reflective player. Sadly, most people just recall the ferocious flamethrower blasts. Check out 'A Heavy Creeping Shade' where mulish braying is subtly interspersed by a lovely, gently-blown lyrical theme on bass sax; and the suspenseful use of silence and shakuhachi-like overtones of the tarogato on 'The Sky Is Laced With Fitful Red'. Even the scorching tone of 'A Lying Tale' is infused with an Ayleresque *melodic* intensity. Poetry in breathless motion. Terrific!

Fellow-German reedsman Wolfgang Fuchs came to improv in 1974. While his name doesn't yet carry the iconic resonance of a Brötzmann or a Parker, **Bits & Pieces**, his second solo album, deserves hefty praise and will, I hope, bring a widespread boosting of his reputation. The first eight tracks are solos, beginning with the contrabass clarinet which throbs and chugs and splutters magnificently, like the recalcitrant engine of a dirty-great motorbike. On these larger clarinets Fuchs reveals his distinctive voice; on bass clarinet he also cracks open a host of remarkably expressive, vocalic utterances — monstrous, menacing, cavernous at the lower end, yet light, flinty and almost frivolous in the altissimo register. Superimposing the two extremes in multiphonic passages elicits some marvellous results. With sopranino sax he often enters terrain well-trodden by Evan Parker on soprano. Together, they're nimble and industrious, but the circular

breathing stuff now sounds a touch predictable. Montera's edgy, droning guitar encourages a more surprising dialogue. (*FMP distr. by Cadillac: 0171 278 7391*)

Scant, *At The Club Room* (Confront Recordings, Front 02 MC) Scant are a trio of lesser-known (internationally) London-based soundsmiths deteminedly exploring the realm of abstract, non-idiomatic improv. Richard Sanderson's electronics seep into the soundfield, adding colour to the brittle and grainy tones/textures of Mark Wastell's cello and Robin Musgrove's metreless, percussive all-sorts; his delicate pointillistic touches and restraint are reminiscent of Hugh Davies. Musgrove is busy, but never dominating — things shaken in bottles, rattled, struck sharply, always leave time and space for others. Unlike most improv cellists, Wastell's playing is refreshingly free from a background in the classics or jazz; occasional pizzicato is about as close as he gets to the conventional. Give them your undivided attention and you'll be engrossed. (*Confront Recordings, 14 B Lascotts Road, London, N22 4JN*)

46,000 Fibres, *Diaphanous* (MTB 022 CD) After hearing London-based 46,000 Fibres' 1995 debut CD **Emanates** (see thumbs-up review in **Rubberneck 18**), I had high hopes for **Diaphanous**; sorry to have to say they've been partially dashed. The new CD consists of nine live performances neatly edited to give the impression of two lengthy improvs. After the attractive, low-key dronescape opening with fragments of Lol Coxhill's guest soprano sax, 'Part 1' is too often driven by a dreadfully leaden, rocky backbeat; add the spacey synths and wild guitar solos and this could almost pass for 60s psychedelic jamming... Happily, 'Part 2' is a marked improvement. Greater textural subtlety and audible detail in the development of expansive atmospherics by synths and guitar especially; non-rhythmic use of percussives here also helps matters. Uneven, but worth investigating. (*MTB, 76 Sullivan Court, Fulham, London, SW6 3DB*)

Conrad Bauer and Johannes Bauer, *Bauer Bauer* (Intakt CD 040 CD) In **Rubberneck 23**, Max Eastley says: "Environments that possess an identity of their own add another dimension to performance." **Bauer Bauer** proves the point magnificently. Forget the Brecker bothers; think Bauer power! German brothers Conrad and Johannes are both leading improv trombonists, here recorded in the stunning ambience of the Monument To The Battle Of The Nations, in Leipzig. The room, occasionally used for concerts, has an echo which can be heard for up to 20 seconds; the Bauers make imaginative use of this, never resorting to superficial stagy effects. It's always a thoughtful musical dialogue, full of subtlety and a significant amount of patient, understated playing: interesting, given the very lively acoustics which can blow a gale when a sudden blast rips

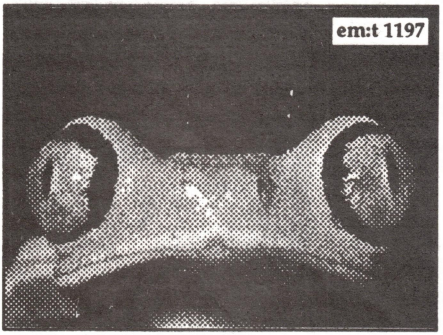
Johannes Bauer

Conrad Bauer

the air. In fact, it's the lower frequencies and slower phrasing that produce some of the most memorable moments, when layers of reverberating tones circumnavigate and fill the room assuming an orchestral magnitude. While both players are clearly idiosyncratic masters, here they seem concerned to respect, even defer, to the echoic idiosyncrasies of the venue itself, allowing these to shape the nature and direction of their improvising, thus making this a truly unique and special

occasion. It would certainly be fascinating to hear more improvisors (say, vocalists, electric guitarists, and how about daxophonists...) using this room as a performance space. (*Intakt Records, P.O. Box 468, CH 8024 Zürich, Switzerland*)

Various Artists (Time Recording em:t 2296 CD); **Various Artists** (Time Recording em:t 1197 CD)



Improvisational Binaural Sound Art is still an under-recognised area of improvisatory activity, so in one sense it's heartening to see it represented here on two CDs arguably targeted at the more 'mainstream experimental' listener. Unfortunately, Dallas Simpson's two works appear incongruous in the company of pieces which strike me as modish ambient-minimalism. Primary difference being that Simpson is concerned to present these environmental sounds as they are, untreated, often unedited, and without a desire to manipulate them into what might be perceived as 'musical structure'.

Futhermore, where these other pieces seem designed to senses, expecting us to pay close attention to the tiniest of sonic details. Here, sounds carry equal weight, challenging the listener to be selective in what they hear, to decide for themselves how these sounds might interrelate. However, titling one of the pieces 'water pump' (em:t 1197), does tend to draw attention to this riveting piece of machinery almost as though it were a featured soloist. I'll try to resist singling out aspects of that piece and also 'abha' (em:t 2296), believing that each listener should discover the subtle delights of these soundworlds without prompting. Suffice it to say, I've seldom heard running water, or trampled undergrowth, or even a bouncing ball, sound this vivid and compelling. Birdsong, of course, is always magical. To receive the marvellous three-dimensional effects of binaural recording you *must* listen on headphones. Dallas Simpson deserves his own CD where his stimulating Sound Art can be properly showcased. Hopefully, Time Recording will oblige. (*distributed by Pinnacle*)

Horse & Nose, *Black Milk* (Serf Music 9 CD); **Green Room**, *Live: Trajectories* (Leo Lab CD 025 CD) Eight improvised duets for guitar and electronics by the Edinburgh-based Chris Atton and Anthony Moffoot. Atton I know from noisesmiths Certain electronic, groove-based energy (Krautrock reminders to techno and jungle) to drive their dense improv, briefly chilling-out with ambient drones on 'Trancetown Trimdon'. 'Hull Docks' and 'O Mister Monkey/Friendly Fire' include manipulated voice fragments and pop tunes; the former makes better structural sense of its dense ingredients by using a few of them in a more grounded, motivic manner; the latter, despite motivic details, is seduced by too much plunderphonic rambling. Even so, this is bold work that puts a 90s spin on 'old school' textural improv. And Atton's guitarphonics deserve a mention — echoes of Frith, Kaiser, Mike Cooper, with lots of Chris, too.

The second album by the Glasgow trio Green Room (see **Rubberneck 20** interview) is a live performance in Edinburgh, February 1996. David Baird, David Garrett and Chick Lyall once again achieve the high standard of sensitive, collective cohesion that made their debut **Hidden Music** (Leo Lab) such a pleasure. Likewise, their use of numerous instruments is always disciplined and inventive; the fusing of large-scale and smaller, intricate gestures, beautifully executed and developed. They listen closely and it shows. A privilege to be asked to write the sleevenotes for this fine album. To reiterate: Green Room are one of the most exciting and intelligent groups to emerge on the British improv scene in recent years. (*Serf Music, 14 Cambridge Gardens, Edinburgh, EH6 5DJ /*

Special Issues

Rubberneck 19
Turning The Musical Table:
Improvisation In Britain 1965 - 1990
by Nick Couldry

A major theoretical analysis of British improvised music and its key practitioners. Authoritative and accessible writing by one of Britain's leading keyboard improvisors.

"As a critic, Couldry's judgements are shrewd." Ben Watson (*The Wire*)
"This is a valuable and thought-provoking piece of writing..." Clive Bell (*Resonance*)

Rubberneck 21
Fiction Issue #2
short fiction by
Louise Petts (B-Shops For The Poor)
Nick Didkovsky (Doctor Nerve)
Rob Henke (Doctor Nerve)
Gavin Salisbury

£3.50 per issue (UK)
£5.00 per issue (Overseas)
Price includes postage.
Payment in pounds Sterling only
All cheques payable to **Rubberneck**
Overseas cheques drawn on a UK bank
£5.00/£10.00 English banknote also acceptable

Back Issues

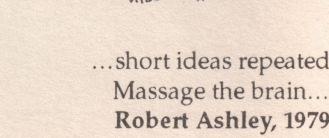
Rubberneck 4 The Fall; Stan Tracey (pt 2) Michael Nyman; That Petrol Emotion
Rubberneck 5 Evan Parker; John Surman Iain Banks; Chris Cutler
Rubberneck 6 Jan Garbarek; John Herbert; Fiction 'Phil Ochs & Elvis Presley' (Chris Cutler)
Rubberneck 7 Jon Hassell; John Cooper Clarke Sudan Diary; Fiction
Rubberneck 8 Paul Rogers; Fred Thelonious Baker Pier Paolo Pasolini; Fiction
Rubberneck 9 *Company*: Derek Bailey; Vanessa Mackness; Yves Robert; Alexander Balanescu Paul Lovens; Pat Thomas
Rubberneck 10/11 Peter Hammill; Jamie Muir Stephan Micus; Improview; Videophile; Prime Cuts
Rubberneck 12 Alfred 23 Harth; Conspiracy New Music from Russia; Soviet Cinema
Rubberneck 13 David Moss; Sylvia Hallett John Butcher; Jean Cocteau
Rubberneck 14 *Fiction Issue #1* Jamie Muir; Lawrence Upton; Chris Blackford
Rubberneck 15 Sun Ra; John Russell; Pat Thomas Simon H Fell (pt 1); Clive Bell
Rubberneck 16 Hans Reichel; Martin Archer; Chris Burn; Frank Zappa; Gentle Giant; F W Murnau
Rubberneck 17 Michel Doneda; Jim Denley Philipp Wachsmann; Simon H Fell (pt 2)
Rubberneck 18 John Stevens; Emily Bezar; Jin Hi Kim & Joseph Celli; Howard Riley; Victor Sjöström
Rubberneck 20 Biota; Tim Hodgkinson; Green Room Doctor Nerve; Lol Coxhill; Walerian Borowczyk
Rubberneck 22 B-Shops; Elton Dean; Hal Rammel Hugh Davies; Third Ear Band; Jean Painlevé
Rubberneck 23 King Crimson; Joe Maneri; Max Eastley; David Jackson; Comus; Benjamin Christensen

£1.75 per issue (UK)
£2.50 per issue (Overseas)
Price includes postage
Cheques/Eurocheques & Postal Orders payable to **Rubberneck**. All overseas cheques drawn on a UK bank, please! English banknotes are also acceptable.
Back Issues *cannot* be exchanged for IRCs

Next Issue

To receive **Rubberneck 26**, planned for December 1997, please send a large 40p SAE (UK); or a large self-addressed envelope and 2 IRCs (EC countries)/3 IRCs (elsewhere)

Rubberneck
21 Denham Drive, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6LT, England


...ridge or wrist etc.
(rest or coat with rubber.
rubbernecker, n. (Amer. slang) a gaping
sightseer, an inquisitive person. —v.
(Amer. slang) to behave as a rubbernecker.
rubbery adj. like rubber.
n. 1. waste or worthless material.
rubbishy adj.
rough fragments

...short ideas repeated
Massage the brain...
Robert Ashley, 1979